

CONSIDERATIONS
UPON
CHRISTIAN TRUTHS
AND
CHRISTIAN DUTIES;
DIGESTED INTO
MEDITATIONS
FOR
EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

By the Venerable and Right Reverend
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PART III.
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*Blessed is the man—whose will is in the law of the Lord, and he
shall meditate on his law day and night.*

*And he shall be like a tree, which is planted near the running wa-
ters, which shall bring forth its fruits in due season.*

*And his leaf shall not fall off, and all whatsoever he shall do, shall
prosper. Psalm i. 1, 2, 3.*



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CONSIDERATIONS

O N

CHRISTIAN TRUTHS, AND CHRISTIAN DUTIES;

O R

MEDITATIONS

FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

JULY 1. *On Time, and Eternity.*

CONSIDER first, how precious a thing time is, which we are so apt to squander away, as if it were of no value. Time is the measure of our lives: therefore as much as we lose of our time, so much of our lives is absolutely lost. All our time is given us, in order to our employing it in the service of our maker, and by that means securing to our souls a happy eternity; and there is not one moment of it, in which we may not labour for an eternity; and in which we may not store up for ourselves a treasure for an eternity: so that, as many as we lose of these precious moments, they are so many lost eternities. Our time is a talent, with which God has entrusted us; and of which he will one day demand of us a strict account, how we have spent every hour of it. Our salvation, or damnation for eternity, will depend upon the good or bad use of our time. Ah! how little do we think of

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this? How little do we think of the sins we are daily guilty of, in squandering away so much of this precious time!

Consider 2dly, how short is the whole time of this mortal life: a mere nothing compared with eternity: and how very quickly it passes away. When past, it is gone; it is no more, it leaves no footsteps behind it. Time to come is not ours: we cannot promise ourselves one moment of it. The present time is all we can call our own: and God only knows how long it will be so. It flies away in an instant; and when once it is gone, it cannot be called back. Our hours, one after another, all pass away with precipitate haste, into the vast gulph of eternity, and are swallowed up there, and then appear no more. The very moment, in which we are reading this line, is just passing, never, never more to return. And as many of these hours, as many of these moments, as are once lost, are lost for ever; the loss is irreparable. Learn hence, O my soul, to set a just value upon the present time: learn to husband it well, and employ it all to the best advantage.

Consider 3dly, that as all time is short, and passes quickly away; so all the *temporal* enjoyments, of the honours, riches, and pleasures of this world, are of the like condition, they all pass away with time: they are all transitory, uncertain, and inconstant. Only eternity, and the goods or evils, which it comprizes, are truly great; as being without end, without change, without comparison; admitting of no mixture of evil in its goods; nor any alloy of comfort in its evils. O, how quickly does the glory of this world pass away! How very soon will all temporal grandeur, all worldly pride and state, all the riches and pleasures of worldlings, be buried in the coffin! A few short years are more than any one can promise himself; And after that, poor sinner, what will become of thee? Alas! the worms will prey upon thy body; and merciless devils on thy unrepenting soul! Thy worldly friends will all forget thee; The very stones, on which thou hast got thy name engraved, will not long out-live thee. O how true is that sentence:



sentence: *vanity of vanities, and all is vanity but to love God and to serve him alone!* Kempis.

Conclude to make such use of this present time, and of all temporary things, as to make them serviceable to thy soul in her journey towards eternity. But take care not to let thy heart cleave to them, by any disorderly affection, lest thou be entangled in them, and perish with them.

JULY 2. *On the visitation of the blessed Virgin.*

CONSIDR first, how the Blessed Virgin, having now conceived in her womb the Son of God; and having learnt from the Angel Gabriel that her kinswoman St. Elizabeth had also, by a miracle, conceived a son, in her old age; makes haste to visit her: and being now full of God herself, carries her treasure with her to the house of Zachary; to impart, out of the abundance of it, grace and sanctity, both to the mother, and to the son. See, my soul, how the Son of God incarnate for us, whilst he is yet in his mother's womb, begins to communicate his graces, not only to his Blessed Mother herself, by elevating her soul daily more and more to a greater fulness of grace; but also to John Baptist his forerunner, (by sanctifying him before he is born,) and to holy St. Elizabeth, by filling her with the Holy Ghost; and making his Blessed Mother the instrument of these his wonders. Give ear to the Gospel (*Luke i. 39. &c.*) *Mary rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda. And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished, that were spoken*

to thee by the Lord, &c. This visitation, so full of mysteries, and the source of many extraordinary graces, is honoured, by the church, in the festival of this day.

Consider 2dly more in particular the wonders of this day's visit. See how at the first voice of the mother of God, by the all-powerful grace of him whom she bears in her womb, the Baptist is immediately cleansed from original sin: see how he is justified, and sanctified in his mother's womb: See how the use of reason is advanced in him; and how in that darksome prison, he is made sensible of the presence of the *true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world*: See with what ardour of devotion and love he is carried towards his Lord, and his sovereign Good; and leaps for joy, at his presence; longing as it were to break forth from his confinement, and to go before him, and publish aloud to all the world; *Behold the Lamb of God! Behold him who taketh away the sin of the world!* John i. 29. But see also the wonderful lights, and extraordinary graces, that are communicated to St. Elizabeth, by this visitation: see how she is filled with the Holy Ghost: see in how clear a manner, the great mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, with all its consequences and fruits, is revealed to her: what a sense she has of the high dignity of the Virgin Mother of God; and with what ardour of devotion she publishes aloud the sentiments of her soul; and glorifies both the Son, and the Mother: acknowledging herself infinitely unworthy of so great a favour, as that of a visit from them. Bless thy Lord, my soul, for all these wonders of his grace; and learn with what sentiments of devotion; with what faith; with what hope; with what love; with what humility; thou oughtest to draw near to this same Lord, on our altars, lying hid in the sacred mysteries. Learn also what extraordinary graces may be drawn from this inexhaustible source of all grace: as also how great the benefit is of his visiting mankind, by his *being made flesh, and dwelling amongst us*: and how powerful and effectual is the intercession of his Blessed Mother, for the procuring from him the greatest blessings to Christian souls.

Consider

Consider 3dly, how the soul of the Virgin Mother was affected upon this occasion. She has expressed the sentiments of her heart, in that admirable canticle she then pronounced. *My soul, faith he, doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is his name, &c.* See, my soul, in these words, as well as in all the rest of that divine canticle, the wonderful sense this Blessed Virgin had of the infinite goodness and mercy of God, in the great work of the incarnation of his Son; her exceeding great joy in God, joined with love and praise on that occasion; her gratitude, for her having been freely chosen by the divine bounty to be the happy instrument of God, in effecting that admirable work: and her most profound humility, in ascribing nothing at all to herself; but giving all the glory to God; and admiring his wonderful ways, in choosing for so great a work, so weak, so mean, so lowly an instrument, as she esteemed herself. Learn, O my soul, to imitate these her sentiments.

Conclude to give thanks to our Lord, for all his wonders, wrought at this visitation; and for the many visits, with which he so frequently favours thee. Beware lest any want of correspondence of thy part, deprive thee of thy share in the great blessings and graces, which he usually imparts to such souls, as give proper entertainment to his divine visits.

JULY 3. *On the good employment of time.*

CONSIDER first, how great a treasure *time* is, when well employed. Every hour of it is of far greater value than all the kingdoms of the earth: because in every hour of it, if well employed, we may purchase an eternal kingdom in heaven: but all the kingdoms of the earth put together, are not able to purchase, for the dying sinner, one hour of time, in his greatest want of it. Ah! it is then, that sinners will begin to be convinced of the value of *time*, and of the

infinite importance of employing it well; when they shall see themselves upon the brink of eternity, and when there shall be no more time for them. But O! what would not the damned in hell give for one of these hours? And how well would they employ it, if it could be allowed them? But alas! they would not work, whilst the time was; whilst they had the day-light before them: and now the dismal and eternal night has overtaken them, in which there is no time to work; and in which they shall with a bitter, but fruitless repentance, eternally condemn their past folly and madness, in misemploying and squandering away, during life, so much precious time. O Christians, let us learn to be wise at their expence.

Consider 2dly, the strict obligation, incumbent upon us all, of employing our whole time to the best advantage. Our time is not our own: it belongs to our maker, it is lent us by our Lord and master. The servant is strictly bound to employ his time, in the service of his master: he is both an idle and a wicked servant, if being hired to work, he spends his time in play. What then must we think of ourselves, if being made, and sent into this world, by our great master, for nothing else, but to spend the short time of our mortal life in serving him, and doing his will, we squander it all away in empty amusements, worldly diversions, and vanities; or in doing our own will, rather than his? Ah! Christians, deceive not yourselves: such a crying injustice as this calls to heaven for vengeance; the wasting and destroying so much of your masters precious time, (more precious by far than all the goods of the world) will never pass unpunished. If you are to be accountable for every idle word, how much more for every idle hour? O! reflect how much it cost your dear Redeemer to purchase for you this time. By sin you had forfeited your life, and consequently your time, and incurred the guilt of a double death: and whatsoever time God has allowed you, since your sin, has been purchased for you by the blood of Christ, in order to your repentance; and a new life. It has cost him an infinite price; it belongs to him: the alienating it from him is a robbery;

bery; it is a sacrilege: it is perverting to your greater damnation what he purchased for your salvation.

Consider 3dly, the immense treasures of grace, and the everlasting glory, that may be continually stored up, by a good employment of time. There is not one moment of all the time of this mortal life, in which, if well employed, we may not purchase a new degree of eternal bliss, now every new degree of eternal bliss, is something infinitely more precious, and more desirable, than all the riches, and all the kingdoms of the earth. What a loss it is then to lose any of these happy moments: it is losing so many immense and eternal treasures. A loss so great, that if the happy state of the blessed in heaven could admit of any such thing as grief, they would certainly regret to all eternity, all those moments of the time of their mortal pilgrimage, which they had not employed to the best advantage: when they shall clearly see, in the light of God, what an immense increase of eternal glory, and happiness, they might have acquired, by the due employment of all those precious moments.

Conclude to have ever before thy eyes the infinite advantages, that are to be found in employing well thy time; and the strict obligation thou hast of spending it all in the service of thy Maker: and this according to his ordinance; and agreeably to the end for which he sent thee hither; and for which he gives thee all thy time. And ever remember, that in his account, all that time will be considered, as idly spent, and quite squandered away, that has not been dedicated to the doing his will.

JULY 4. On remembering our last things.

CONSIDER first, those words of the wise man (*Ecclus. vii. 40.*) *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou wilt never sin:* and reflect how true it is, that the memory of the four last things has a wonderful efficacy, to restrain the soul from sin; and to take off the heart from the affections to it. The remembrance of death, the view of the grave, of the coffin, of the shroud, of the worms, and the maggots, and of the speedy

speedy corruption of this carcass of ours; the serious, and frequent consideration, of the necessity of our quickly parting with all that we love in this world; and of our being forsaken, and presently forgotten by all; must needs humble our pride, and vain-glory; abate our fondness for this world, and its deluding toys; check our sensual and carnal inclinations; and keep all our passions under. *O! the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, can never endure the sight of the grave.* But then when we look beyond the grave; and meditate at leisure on the strict account we must one day give to an all-wise, all-powerful, and most just judge, who cannot endure iniquity: when we consider that his eye is ever upon all our thoughts, words, and works; and that they are all to be weighed in the scales of his divine justice; and according as they are there found, we are to be rewarded or punished for endless ages; and to be either infinitely happy, or infinitely miserable: how is it possible that in the midst of such considerations as these, we should dare to sin.

Consider 2dly, that the remembrance of the four last things wonderfully serves, to correct the errors of worldlings; to open their eyes to truth; and to shut them to vanity. The transitory things of this world, its goods, and its evils, as we call them, are apt to make a great impression on our poor souls, shut up, as they are, in this earthly prison. We take them for something: we are fond of honour, riches and pleasures, as if they were solid goods: and we are afraid of contempt, poverty, and pain; as if they were real evils. But the meditating on our last end undeceives us; it quickly convinces us, that all is nothing that passes with time; that nothing is truly great, but what is eternal; that those things deserve not the name of *goods*, that contribute nothing to make us either good here, or happy hereafter: and that those are no evils, which help to bring us to an infinite *good*. In fine, as to all the false maxims of the world, and the prevailing opinions and practices of its unhappy slaves, and their abettors; this kind of consideration on the last things exposes the folly

folly and madness of them all; and sets it in such a light, as to determine the soul to adhere no longer to such perverse, and erroneous notions, as will certainly be changed in death, condemned at the last judgment, and if not recalled in time, punished in hell, for all eternity.

Consider 3dly, the manifold fruits, which have been heretofore, and are daily produced, by the serious consideration of the four last things. Even the most hardened sinners have often been converted from their wicked ways to a penitential life, by the terror of those thundering truths, death, judgment, hell, eternity. The preaching, the reading, and meditating on these truths, has sent numbers into deserts, or religious houses, there to secure their eternal salvation, by a saintly life: and such considerations as these have generally laid the first foundation even of the most eminent sanctity. O what lessons may we not learn, among the silent monuments of the dead, who made some noise heretofore in the world; but now are thought of no more! What lectures, what instructions, what exhortations, may we not daily receive, by attending in spirit at the trials of the great bar; by going down, while we are alive, into the darksome dungeons below, and viewing at leisure what is doing there; and by ascending up into heaven, and contemplating those happy mansions of eternal bliss, prepared for the reward, of the momentary labours, and sufferings, of the servants of God? O let us daily frequent these schools.

Conclude to make it thy practice to think often on these important subjects, which so nearly concern thy everlasting welfare. It will be a sovereign means to prevent an unprovided *death*: it will teach thee to be always in readiness for *judgment*: it will keep thee out of *hell*: and bring thee to *heaven*.

JULY 5. *On the certainty of death.*

CONSIDER first, that, there is nothing more certain than death. *It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment,* Heb. ix. 27: The sentence

sentence is general: it is pronounced upon all the children of Adam; *Eccles* xli. 5. Neither riches, nor dignity, nor strength, nor wisdom, nor all the power of the world, can exempt any one from this common doom. From the first moment of our birth, we are hastening towards our death: every moment brings us nearer to it. The day will come, when we shall never see the night: or the night will come, when the Sun will no more rise to us. The day will most certainly come, when thou, my soul, who art reading these lines, must bid a long farewell to this cheating world, and to all thou hast admired therein, and even to thy own body, the individual companion of thy life; and take thy journey to another country, a strange and unknown land to thee; where all thou settest a value on here will appear as smoke. O learn then to despise all these perishable things; and to set thy heart on nothing, since all must be taken away by death.

Consider 2dly, that death is not only certain; but generally speaking much nigher than we imagine. If ever we look upon death, it is generally with the wrong end of the perspective glass, which removes the object to a great distance, when indeed it is very near. We are apt to flatter ourselves, with the worldling in the gospel, *Luke* xii. with the expectation, of many years enjoyment, of our worldly goods and pleasures: and when we least of all suspect it, we are called away; we must suddenly be gone: *Thou fool*, saith our Lord, *this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* Thousands are dying, this very hour, throughout the world; and perhaps not one of them all, but expected to have lived many more years. We daily hear of sudden deaths: we daily hear of young and strong people carried off by short sicknesses, in the very flower of their age: and why will we deceive ourselves? Why will we vainly imagine ourselves out of the reach of these arrows of death, that are falling so thick on all sides of us? *Ah! fool, why dost thou think to live long, when thou art not sure of one day?* Kempis.

Consider

Consider 3dly, the wretched blindness and stupidity of mortals, that think so little of death, and live as if they were to be always here: and by this means, expose themselves every day to the dreadful danger, of dying in their sins. And yet alas! all this while they cannot be ignorant, that death is continually following them at their heels: they even carry it about with them, in the frail composition of their mortal frame. All the things about them, by their continual fading, remind them of their mortality. They daily see, or hear of deaths, or burials; or meet with the monuments of the dead; who from their silent tombs, cease not to admonish them, in the words of the wise man, *Ecclus xxxviii. Remember my judgment: for thine also shall be so: Yesterday for me, and to-day for thee.* O my soul, do thou at least give ear to this admonition: keep death always before thy eyes; and when it comes, thou shalt have nothing to fear.

Conclude, since thou must so quickly be gone from hence, to set thy house now in order; and to make all necessary provision for that long journey, which thou must shortly take: and ever strive to be such in life, as thou desirest to be found in death.

JULY 6. *On the uncertainty of the time and manner of our death.*

CONSIDER first, that death is the passage from time to eternity. If we die well, it will be well with us, for all eternity: but if we die ill, it will be ill with us, for endless ages: so that upon this one moment of death depends a long eternity. But when will this moment come? When shall we die? Will it be this night, or to-morrow? Will it be a week; a month, a year hence, &c? Oh, of all this we know nothing at all: only that it will be, when we least look for it: For our Lord has assured us, that he will come, like a thief in the night, that is when we least think on it. *Luke xii.* And therefore he tells us we must always *watch*, and always *be ready*: for if we are surprized, and die in our sins, we are lost for ever.

Consider

Consider 2dly, that we are not only wholly ignorant of the time of our death; but also of all other circumstances relating to it. We neither know the place, where we shall die; nor the manner how we shall die; nor whether our death will be violent, or natural; by fever, or consumption; gentle, or sharp; of quick dispatch, or more lingering; at home or abroad; whether our last illness will deprive us of our senses, or no; whether we shall have the assistance of our ghostly father, and the helps of the sacraments, or no; what dispositions our souls shall then be in; or what ability we shall then have, to make proper use of those last moments, upon which our all depends, for eternity. Alas! all these things are quite hidden from us: no wit, no learning, no wisdom upon earth can help any man to the knowledge of any one of these things. O let this dreadful uncertainty, of all the particulars, that relate to our death, determine us to live always in the expectation, and preparation for death: that we may not have that great work to do, at a time, when we may have no convenience or ability to do it.

Consider 3dly, that death being so certain, and the time and manner of it so uncertain; it would be no small satisfaction to a poor sinner, if he could die more than once; that so if he had the misfortune once to die ill, he might repair the fault, by taking more care a second time. But alas! we can die but once: and when once we have set our foot within the gates of eternity, there is no coming back: and if it be a miserable eternity, into which we have slept, there is no redemption; we pass from death to a second death, to the very extremity of misery, without end or remedy. O how hard it is to do that well, which we can do but once; and can never try or practise beforehand! O my soul see then thou take care to study well this important lesson; by a continual preparation for death.

Conclude to make it the great business of thy life to learn to die well. Remember there is no security against an evil death but a good life: every thing else leaves thee exposed to dreadful uncertainties.

JULY

JUNE 7. *On preparing for death.*

CONSIDER first, that the preparing for death, is a business of the utmost importance: it is the great business of life. We came into this world, as pilgrims and travellers, to make the best of our way, towards our true and everlasting home, a happy eternity. The great business of our whole life, is to secure this happy eternity: and nothing else can secure it but a good death. This is the necessary gate, through which we must pass to eternal life: if we think of arriving at it, by any other way, we shall miss the road. A good death then must be the study and business of our whole life: our whole life ought to be a preparation for it. Happy they who are continually preparing for it by a good life; Unhappy they who defer their preparation to their death bed; and thereby put the issue of an eternity upon the poor chance of a death-bed performance!

Consider 2dly, the great but general error of men, who promise themselves to do great things in point of devotion and contrition, when they are sick and like to die; and upon the confidence of this, are often careless in preparing for death, during the time of their health. Alas! how strangely will they one day find themselves deceived! For if a small pain, or indisposition, be enough at any time to spoil all our devotion, what must a mortal illness be: when either the dulness and stupidity, caused by the distemper, or the anguish of body and mind, scarce allow of any application at all of our thoughts, to the greatest of all our concerns? O my soul, see thou suffer not thyself to be thus imposed upon. Do now all thou art able; prepare thyself now for thy last end, by daily and fervent acts of devotion and contrition; every night strive to put thyself in the condition, in which thou desirest to be found at thy death: But never tempt God, by designing to live in sin; and then to die in grace; or by expecting so extraordinary a miracle of grace, as to pass from being a slave all thy life time, to sin and Satan, to the loving

God above all things, at thy death. No, no, *God is not to be mocked* in this manner.

Consider gaily, that the best manner of preparing for death, is to die daily, to our sinful inclinations and passions; to the love of the world, and of the flesh, and to our own unhappy self-love, the root of all our evils; and this by the means of a general mortification, and self denial. This is that great lesson, perpetually inculcated by the Son of God, in the Gospel, of leaving all to follow him, of disengaging our hearts from all things else, of renouncing our dearest affections for his sake, of denying and hating ourselves in this world, that so we may save our souls, and possess our God forever in the world to come. O how sweet, how happy, how secure, will our death be; if it finds us thus untied from the earth, and all earthly clogs! O how shall we then long for the wings of the dove, to fly away from the land of misery and sin, and to repose eternally in God!

Conclude to be ever preparing thyself for death; by refraining from all that thou wouldst then wish not to have done: and by living every day, and doing every work, as if it were to be the last of thy life: and thou shalt not fail to die happily.

JULY 8. On the sentiments we shall have at the hour of our death.

CONSIDER first, how different a judgment the soul will make of all things at the approaches of death, from that which she is apt to make in life: O how will the world then turn upside down before her eyes! Ah! my soul, how wilt thou then despise all worldly honours and preferments, when thou shalt see thyself at the brink of the grave, where the worms will make no distinction between the king, and the beggar! How little account wilt thou then make of the praise, esteem or love of men, who will then think no more of thee! How wilt thou then undervalue thy riches; when thou shalt see them slipping away from thee, and leaving thee nothing but a coffin and a shroud! How contemptible will all worldly pleasures then appear in thy
eyes,

eyes, which at the best could never afford thee any true satisfaction, and now will shew what they really are, and dissolve into smoke! O let us make the same judgment now concerning all these things, as we shall do then! Let us weigh them all in these scales, and we shall not be cheated. For why should we set our affections upon such short-lived slippery toys? Why should we admit of a love, that cannot stand the test of death?

Consider 2dly, O my soul, what will then be thy sentiments with regard to thy sins; of which perhaps thou hast hitherto made but small account? O how hideous, how odious, will they begin to appear to thee, how numerous, how enormous; when the curtain shall begin to be withdrawn, with which thy busy self love has industriously hidden them, or disguised the deformity and malice of them; and they shall be set before thy eyes in their true light: when that false conscience, which thou hast framed to thyself, and under the cover of which thou hast passed over many things in thy confessions, as slight and inconsiderable, which thou wast ashamed to declare, or unwilling to forsake; shall no longer be able to maintain its ground, at the approach of death? O what anguish! What remorse! What dread! What confusion! What despair will invade a poor dying sinner, at the sight of this dreadful scene, of this army of his sins drawn up in battle array against him! Ah! Christians let us be wise in time, and prevent so great an evil, by taking all such precautions now, with regard to our sins as we shall certainly wish to have taken then.

Consider 3dly, my soul, what thy sentiments will be, at the time of thy death, with relation to the service of God, to virtue, and devotion? O how lovely then will the way of virtue appear to thee! O how wilt thou then wish to have always followed that charming path! But what will thy sentiments be with regard to the value of *grace*? How bitterly wilt thou then regret the neglect of so many calls and invitations of thy gracious God; the loss of so many favourable opportunities of storing up eternal treasures; the squandering

dering away so much of thy precious time; the mis-employing so many of God's gifts and talents; the abuse of the sacraments, &c. Ah! how many great, but ungrateful truths, will then discover themselves to the sinner, against which he had shut his eyes before! How will the false reasonings of the world, the delusions of his passions, the subtleties of his self-love, together with the affected ignorance of such things as he had no mind to know, all forsake him at the approaches of death; and leave him in the lurch, at the time of his greatest distress?

Conclude to enter into those sentiments now, with regard to all these things, that will stand by thee at the hour of thy death. For why shouldest thou any longer suffer thyself to be the dupe of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and give into their impostures, with evident danger of the eternal loss of thy immortal soul.

JULY 9. *On the death of the just man.*

CONSIDER first, those words of the royal prophet, *Pf. cxv. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.* And reflect how true it is, that the death of such as have served God, in good earnest, is indeed both precious in the sight of God, and edifying in the eyes of men; because of those happy dispositions, with which they meet death: especially that faith and confidence, which they have in the goodness and mercies of their heavenly Father, and in the infinite merits of Jesus Christ their Redeemer; and that perfect conformity to the divine will; accompanied with a profound humility, a deep sense of sorrow for sin, and an ardent love of God: with which they close their eyes, and yield up their souls into their creator's hands. O what a happiness it is for a dying man to be in these dispositions! With what willingness does such a Christian as this, leave this world! What peace and tranquility does he find in his soul, from the testimony of a good conscience! How joyfully does he throw himself into the arms of his tender father, who, he is well assured, will never reject his loving children,
who

who cast their whole care upon him! *O let my soul die the death of the just, and let my last end be like to theirs,* Numb. xxiii. 10.

Consider 2dly, what a comfort it is to a good man, at the approaches of death, to see himself now so near to the end of all his labours, of all the miseries of this wretched life, and of all those dangerous conflicts, and temptations, to which he has hitherto been exposed, from those mortal enemies of his soul, the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to find himself just upon the point of being delivered from his long prison, from *the body of this death, from the servitude of corruption, and from sin, that surroundeth him*, on all sides, in this vale of tears; and of being called home from his banishment, to his true country, which he has always longed for. O what a satisfaction it is to a lover of God to see himself now at the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, where he is to see, love and enjoy his God for ever! What a pleasure to look forward into that blessed eternity; into which he is just now entering; and to sing with the psalmist, *Pf. cxxi. I rejoice at the things that are said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord. O blessed are they who dwell in thy house, O Lord, they shall praise thee for ever and ever. Pf. lxxxiii.* To such souls as these when they are near their death, those words of our divine Saviour are directed, *Luke xxi. 28. Look up, and lift up your heads: because your redemption is at hand,*

Consider 3dly, the particular providence of God, in favour of his servants at their death, expressed by the prophet, *Pf. xl. 4. in those words: The Lord helps them on the bed of their sorrow, he turns all their couch for them in their sickness.* He restrains their enemy at that time, he mitigates their fears and apprehensions, he supports them under their pains, and agonies, he encourages them against the terrors of death and judgment, he protects them in that critical hour under the shadow of his wings; that they may be able to say with the psalmist, *Pf. xxii. Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will not fear evils, for thou*

thou art with me. In fine he never forfakes them in death, who in their life have been faithful to him; but more particularly helps them then, when they stand most in need of his assistance, and when all the world besides forfakes them. O blessed be his goodness for ever!

Conclude, if thou desirest to die the death of the just, to live the life of the just, and to do the works of the just: for such as thy works are during life, such will thy death also be. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, they may rest from their labours: for their works follow them.* Revel. xiv. 13. See then that thy works be such, as may make thy life holy; and thy death will not fail to be happy.

JULY 10. *On the death of the wicked.*

CONSIDER first, that, as nothing is more desirable than the death of the just man, by which he puts a happy conclusion to all the labours and miseries of this dying life, which we are leading here below; and enters into the never-ending joys of his Lord; so on the other hand, nothing can be conceived more wretched, more dismal and deplorable, than the death of the wicked. *The death of the wicked is very evil: saith the Holy Ghost, Ps. xxxiii. 22.* It is *very evil* indeed, as often as they are unexpectedly hurried away in their sins; and go down in a moment into hell; it is *very evil* also as often as they die hard, and with little or no sense of God, or eternity. But supposing neither the one nor the other to be the case, the death of the wicked is still *very evil*; from the torture of their conscience, from the sense of present misery, and the dreadful apprehension of a miserable eternity: and what ever way they look; all things seem to conspire against them; to depounce the judgments of God to them; and to set before their eyes a dismal scene of wo. Ah! how feelingly do they now experience that of the psalm, (cxiv.) *The sorrows of death have encompassed me, and the perils of hell have found me.*

Consider

Consider edly, more in particular, the principal ingredients of this bitter cup, which the wicked, who will not think during life, are so often constrained to drink of in death. And first the remembrance of their past sins, appearing now quite in other colours, than they had represented them to themselves before; all staring them now in the face, in their most ugly shapes, and with their united forces, making a vehement assault upon them, to push them down headlong into the bottomless pit of despair. O how gladly would the dying sinner rid himself now of this odious company! What would he not give to shake off from his breast this vipers blood of his own offspring! But all in vain; they will not be shaken off. O how sensible do they make him feel the gripes of their gnawing; not unlike those of that never dying worm, which is one of the worst of the torments of hell! Then the remembrance of the graces, they have so long resisted; of the opportunities of good, they have so often neglected; of the talents they have buried; of the time they have squandered away, (one hour of which they cannot now recal, though they would give ten thousand worlds for it;) of their past abuses of the sacraments, of the word of God, and of prayer, those great means of salvation; and the little good, they can find in their whole lives, to put in the scales against so much evil; must add very much to their unspeakable anguish and distress; coming in upon them at this sad time, when they have so little presence of mind, so little leisure, opportunity or ability, of doing any thing themselves; and have too much reason to apprehend that God has forsaken them.

Consider 3dly, what anguish it is also to the dying sinner, to see himself violently torn away from all those things he had set his heart upon in this world. *O cruel death*, will he then say, *dost thou make so bitter a separation?* (1 Sam. xv. 32.) What sad farewells will he be then constrained to bid to his honours, riches, pleasures, and all other worldly enjoyments: to his friends, kindred, house and family, together with the whole

whole world; and his own body too; in order, to depart into an unknown country; and to take no things with him thither, but his works, which he would gladly leave behind him. O how does the sight of all about him, his wife, his children, and his worldly goods; which he has loved more than his God; now serve for nothing, but to increase his misery? And if, to change the melancholy scene, he endeavours to divert his thoughts from the remembrance of his past extravagances, and present miseries; and to look forward; he meets there with still more frightful objects, from the just apprehension of what will follow after death; what hands he shall fall into then; what a severe trial he must immediately go through; and what the sad consequences must be, if he be there cast. Alas! he sees himself just now launching forth, with all his evils, into eternity, an immense ocean to whose further shore the poor sailor can never reach; and which he has too much reason to fear, will be to him an eternity of woe.

Conclude to lead a virtuous life; and thou wilt have no share in this dismal scene of evils, which attends the death of the wicked.

JULY 11. On the condition of the body after death.

CONSIDER first, that the soul is no sooner departed from the body, but this wretched carcase, which she leaves behind, immediately becomes pale, stiff, loathsome, and frightful: insomuch that the dearest friends of the deceased, can scarce endure to watch one night, in the same room with it; and would not be induced by any consideration to lie in the same bed. Even the greatest beauties are now turned ugly, and hideous; and their former admirers can no longer bear the sight of them. O ye children of men, how long will you be fond of these painted dunghills! We read that St. Francis Borgia, was so touched with the ghastly countenance of the corpse of the Empress Isabella, (whom he had seen a little while before in all her majesty, and all her charms) seeing the strange change that death had so suddenly wrought in her, that he
conceived

conceived upon the spot an eternal disgust against this world, and a happy resolution of wholly consecrating himself to the love and service of that great king, who never dies. O that the like consideration of the dismal change, that death will so quickly make in all mortal beauties, might effectually move us to the like resolution!

Consider 2dly, that a person is no sooner dead, but the body begins to corrupt and stink: and in a very short time it becomes so insupportable, that surviving friends are obliged to make haste to get it out of the house, and to lay it deep under ground, that it may not infect the air. And were the grave, after some weeks, to be opened again, and this carcass to be brought out to view, what a filthy carrion should we meet with? What a sight, what a smell would it afford? And what should we think of a person, who should be tied down to such a companion: a barbarity said to have been exercised by a certain tyrant, in binding the living to the dead, and letting them linger away in these noisome embraces? Surely the worst of torments would not be half so insupportable. So foul, so detestable a thing is a dead corpse, that is half putrified. O mortals, why will you then not remember what your composition is, and what you are quickly like to come to? O filth and corruption, why wilt thou be proud?

Consider 3dly, what companions, what attendants, these bodies of ours must meet with in the grave? Ah! no others, than worms and maggots, or such like foul insects. *Under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering*, Isai. xiv. 11. For these, O man, thou art preparing a banquet, when thou art pampering thy body. These are to be thy inheritance, or rather they are to inherit thee: whatever thou art to-day, to-morrow thou art to be the food of worms. See here, vain worldlings, what will soon be the end of all these beauties, which you are so fond of, and which are so apt to draw you in to sin: filthy maggots shall very shortly prey upon these pretty faces.

Conclude

Conclude to make small account of the beauty of the body, or of any thing else that death can take away; and to turn thy thoughts towards the better part, by laying up immortal riches for thy immortal soul: and procuring for her such ornaments of Christian virtues, as may be out of the reach of death.

JULY 12. *On the soul's first entering into another world.*

CONSIDER first, how the soul in death shuts her eyes, in a moment, to this world, and to all persons and things, for which she has entertained any affection here; never to take any more part in the transactions of this life: and immediately opens them to a new and surprizing scene, quite strange to her, in a region of spirits, an unknown land, of which before she had no idea. She awakes, as it were, out of a dream, which is now slipt away from her, and leaves both her hands and her heart empty; all is over with her as to this world: she is estranged for ever from all conversation of mortals: no one of her dearest friends can accompany her, or attend her now: she finds herself abandoned by all her lovers; quite naked; and, what is most frightful, encompassed with infernal furies, who use their utmost efforts to lay violent hands upon her. Good God, who shall protect us, at that hour, from these our mortal enemies!

Consider 2dly, the immense difference, there is found at this time, between the souls of the servants of God, and the souls of the wicked. For although both the one and the other, are to expect, that the common enemy, with all his hellish forces, will exert himself on this occasion, and do his worst to get their souls into his claws: yet the servants of God are defended from his assaults, by the care of their guardian Angels; and under the covert of their wings, go forward with joy and security: being also encompassed, on all sides, with their good works, as with a strong rampart, which both keeps the devil at a distance, and gives them a comfortable assurance, of coming off well at their trial. Whereas the wicked, who have made no such provision
for

provision for themselves, shall now lie at the mercy of the infernal spirits; having nothing else to carry with them to the bar, but the conscience of their past crimes, which will be more terrible to them than the devil himself. O my soul, let us at least be more wise; and take care, whilst we have time, to lay up for ourselves store of good works: and thus make ourselves friends, to stand by us at that hour, which is to decide our eternal doom. Such as these will be friends indeed, that will never forsake us: but will effectually plead our cause at that bar, where no other eloquence will be regarded.

Consider 3dly, in what a wretched plight, poor worldlings will find themselves now; who have provided no such friends as these to plead for them: who have seldom or never thought of this hour; but have lived as if they were never to die. Alas! what will all their honours, riches, and pleasures avail them now! Where is now their state and retinue? Where are all their servants and attendants? What is become of the multitude of their flatterers and visiters? See how they have left them all alone in the evil day: and whatever way they now look for help or comfort, they meet with none: their time is past: they are hurried away, to be immediately tried, and examined at the dreadful bar of a just judge; and all things both within and without them, declare to them the horrible sentence, that is just going to fall upon their heads for an eternity. Sweet Jesus, preserve me from ever having any part to act in so dismal a tragedy!

Conclude to live now in such a manner, as to have no reason to apprehend this scene of evils, which will terrify the sinner at his departure hence: but that thy passage into eternity, may be to thee the gate of a life that knows no death. O take care to carry nothing with thee hence, that may give the enemy any hold of thee then.

JULY 13. *On the particular judgment after death.*

CONSIDER first, that besides the general judgment that shall be at the end of the world, there is a particular judgment, that passes upon the soul presently after death, according to that of the apostle, (speaking of the time when we are discharged from the body,) 1 Cor. v. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good, or evil.* Thus we see, in the case of Dives and Lazarus, *Luke xvi.* that their doom was immediately decided after death, and the one sentenced to the torments of hell, the other carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. See then, my soul, what thou art to look for, as soon as thou art parted from the body; thou must be presented before the judgment-seat of Christ: in order to give an account of thy whole life: even of all that thou hast thought, said, or done, during thy abode in the body; and to receive sentence accordingly for life, or death eternal; and the sentence that shall pass then, will be ratified in the general judgment at the last day. O reflect then how thy accounts stand at present with thy God? O what couldst thou be able to say for thyself, if this night thou shouldst be cited to the bar? It may perhaps be thy case: for the judge has long ago declared, that he will come when thou least expectest him; take care then to be always ready.

Consider 2dly, the qualities of this judge, by whom we are to be tried after death. He is *infinitely holy*; and therefore cannot endure iniquity. He is *infinitely wise*, and therefore cannot be deceived: his all-seeing eye is ever upon all our ways; all the thoughts and motions of our hearts are *naked and open* to his sight; they are all recorded in his book; no one of them all can slip his notice, or memory. He is also *infinitely powerful*; and therefore there is no resisting or withstanding his judgment: no dignity, no authority, no strength, no subtlety, no fraud, no learning or wit, can be available at his tribunal; he made both great and
little;

little; king and beggar are equally his subjects: and there is no respect of persons with him: nor appeal from him. In fine he is *infinitely just*; and therefore *will render to every man at that time according to his works*. No favour is to be expected then for sins unrepented of. The time of merit; and of acceptable repentance is now at an end. Ah! Christians, let us think well on these truths, whilst it is *our day*, in which mercy reigns; let us clear up all our accounts, whilst we have time; let us wash away our sins now with penitential tears; let us store up to ourselves immortal treasures, before the night overtakes us. All that we can then do will come too late.

Consider 3dly, some other circumstances of this great trial: particularly the *law* by which we are to be tried; the *accusers* and *witnesses* that will appear against us: and the nature of the *sentence*, that will be pronounced, after the hearing of the whole cause. The *law* by which we shall be tried, will be the commandments of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ: by this law, by these heavenly rules, we must stand or fall: these will acquit us, or condemn us for eternity. O let us then study them well; and in practice conform our whole lives to them. Our *accusers* will be the *devils*; and the unhappy accomplices of our crimes; more especially such as we have drawn into sin; the blood of whose souls will cry to heaven for vengeance against us. The *witnesses* will be our own guilty consciences. And the *sentence* will be an unchangeable, irrevocable, eternal doom, either to heaven or hell. O let us remember these things; and we shall never sin.

Conclude to let thy whole life henceforward be a preparation for this great trial; and thou shalt not fall of a happy issue.

JULY 14. *On the examination of the soul in judgment.*

CONSIDER first, my soul, what an account will be here demanded of thy stewardship. For thou wilt be here examined, how thou hast discharged thyself of every branch of thy duty, both in general, and in particular: to thy God, to thy neighbour, and to thyself? How thou hast employed all thy precious time? What use thou hast made of the talents God has entrusted thee with? In what manner thou hast corresponded with the graces thou hast received? What profit thou hast reaped, from the sacraments, from the word of God, and from the favourable circumstances, in which God has placed thee. How thou hast acquitted thyself of the duties of thy calling? &c. O poor wretch, what wilt thou be able to answer under so strict an examination, where thy all is at stake for eternity? *O what shall I do*, said holy Job, (Chap. xxxi. 14.) *When God shall arise to judge? And when he shall examine, what shall I answer him?* Alas! who shall be able to endure his scrutiny; or to answer one thing for a thousand! *O Lord enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight no man living shall be justified* Pl. cxliiii.

Consider 2dly, that at this great trial, the whole history of thy life will be set before thee; and all thy hidden sins, all thy sins of commission or omission; even to every idle word, and every thought, and motion of thy heart, will be exposed in their true colours. Ah! what treasures of iniquity will here come to light; when the veil shall be removed, which hides at present the greatest part of our sins, from the eyes of the world, and even from our own; and it shall be said of us: behold the man with all his works: behold all his abominations: behold all his pride, and contempt of God: behold all his filth, &c. O my soul, how wilt thou be able to bear such a sight! O let us then make it our study now, to know our sins, and to efface them by penance, while we have time; that they may not then appear in judgment against us, and condemn us at the bar,

Consider

Consider 3dly, that the poor soul will not only be brought here to a strict examination, with regard to all the evils she has done, and to all the good she has left undone, during the whole time of her pilgrimage in this mortal body: but even all the good she thinks she has done, the very best of her works, her prayers, her fasts, her alms-deeds, her confessions and communions, will all be nicely sifted; as well with relation to the intention, with which she has undertaken them; as to the manner in which she has performed them, &c. And all will be weighed; not in the deceitful balance of the judgment of men; but in the unerring scales of the sanctuary; that is, of divine justice; in which, the works that are most admired by deluded mortals, are often found to be of no weight at all. Alas! poor soul, what an astonishment, what anguish, what confusion, will it be to thee; to see so many things rise up in judgment against thee; now charged upon thee as heinous sins; of which in thy life time thou hadst made but small account: and to find at the same time that these good works, with which thou wast in hopes the scales would be turned in thy favour, have either not been accepted of, for want of just weight; or have been corrupted and vitiated by pride or self-love?

Conclude to have always before thy eyes, this exact account, thou must one day give, of every thought, word, deed, and omission of thy whole life. Remember they all pass from thy hands to the hands of God, to be recorded in his great book; by which thou art to be tried: see thou order them accordingly.

JULY 15. *On the different states of departed souls, before the last day.*

CONSIDER first, that according to the different issue, of this trial, in the particular judgment, the condition of departed souls will be very different. For such as like the rich glutton, (*Luke xvi.*) shall be found, at the time of their departure, quite void of grace, and charity: and in a word, all such as have died in mortal sin, shall like the rich glutton, be immediately buried in

the flames of hell, *where the worm never dies, and the fire is never extinguished.* Ah! how strangely will the men of riches, the great ones of this world, the ladies that have been slaves to their pleasures, here find their condition altered! A bed of fire instead of their soft couches: the want of every thing that can afford the least comfort, even to a drop of water, instead of their former affluence: insulting devils instead of servants and attendants: eternal torments for momentary satisfactions, &c. In fine they who could never brook the least thing contrary to their own humour, appetite or will, now find themselves in an instant plunged into that bottomless pit, where they shall never know what it is to be indulged in any one desire or inclination. O! that the children of this world, the unhappy slaves of their passions, and pleasures, would think of this whilst they have time!

Consider 2dly, the very different condition of the souls of the children of God, after their departure hence. For as many of them as, like the martyrs, and other Saints, shall be found, when they are presented before the Judge, without blemish of sin, or debt of punishment, due to divine justice, on account of former offences, not sufficiently expiated: shall be immediately translated to heavenly joys. *Their earthly house of this temporal dwelling is now dissolved, but they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven.* 2 Cor. v. 1. *They are absent from the body, but present with the Lord,* v. 8. They enjoyed what the apostle so much longed for, when he desired to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. Philip. iii. 23. They are now before the throne of God, and in his temple; and he sitteth on the throne dwelling over them—and the Lamb leads them to the living fountain of waters, Revel. vii. 7, 17. Even the happy waters of eternal life, which ever flow from the throne of God. They follow the Lamb whither soever he goeth. Chap. xiv. 4. and they live, and reign with him. Chap. xx. 4. They even sit with him in his throne, Revel. iii. 21: and exercise with him power over the nations. Chap. ii. 26. See Christians,

if you will but dedicate yourselves in good earnest to the love of God, during your short pilgrimage, what great things are prepared for you in your true country, and that immediately after your departure hence. How little reason then have the true lovers of God to apprehend a death, that will bring them in an instant to the very fountain head of true and everlasting life! O what a happiness it is to *shut in a moment the eyes, with which we see this world and mortals: and to open them immediately to the sight of God, and of Christ!* S. Cyprian.

Consider 3dly, that as all are to be tried, after their departure, by their *works*, and to be rewarded according to their works, which they carry with them hence to the judgment-seat of Christ: so those whose *dead-works* have not been fully expiated by penance; whose devotions and other good works have been full of imperfections; who have built only with *wood, hay, and stubble*, though not to the destroying of *the foundation*, of the faith, and grace of Christ; shall *suffer loss* in this *fiery trial*; and instead of being immediately admitted into the presence of God, in his heavenly temple; where nothing defiled can enter; must wait till the dross they have carried with them out of the world, be purged away, and they be fitted for the sight and enjoyment of their sovereign good. O how few souls will be found at their departure so perfectly pure, as to be qualified to fly up immediately to the embraces of God! How very few are there that carry with them no spot, no blemish, no debt, not even of *an idle word*, into the other world: where by the fixt decrees of heaven, every soul shall be judged and rewarded, accordingly to what she carries hence!

Conclude to spare no pains now to rid thyself, by penitential exercises, of all thy spots, stains, and debts, *whilst thou art on the way*; lest if thou leave them to be discharged in another world, thou mayst *be cast into that prison*, of which it is written, *Matt. v. 26. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence, till thou pay the last farthing.*

JULY 16. *On the sufferings of souls in the middle state.*

CONSIDER first, that in this middle state of souls (which are neither so perfect and pure, as to be presently associated with the Angels and saints in heaven; nor yet so bad, as to be condemned to that lower hell, out of which there is no redemption,) these spirits in prison suffer much, from their being kept at a distance from their God, their only true and sovereign good. They are perfectly sensible now, how infinite he is in himself, in goodness, beauty, truth, and all perfections: and what an infinite happiness it is to be with him, and to enjoy him eternally. All those created goods, that before claimed any share in their affections, are all now vanished away; and their *whole* hearts are now carried towards him, with such vehement longing desires, as by us mortals can neither be expressed nor conceived: so that their being detained from him, in whom alone they can find repose, is an unspeakable anguish to their souls. And what adds to their torture, is the sense they now have of their sins; of all those spots, and stains, that disqualify them for the enjoyment of their God; and of those unhappy debts, that keep them at a distance from him: which they resent with so great horror, that heaven itself would be no heaven to them, if their sins were to follow them thither.

Consider 2dly, that besides these two kinds of sufferings, from the absence of God, and the presence of sin, which are common (though not in an equal degree) to all these imprisoned spirits: there are other great torments inflicted on such as have been great debtors, and negligent penitents; but all with a just proportion to their sins. *They shall be saved saith the Apostle, yet so as by fire,* 1 Cor. iii. 15: But what kind of fire? O! a fire kindled by the wrath of God: a fire which will penetrate their whole souls, and burn, without consuming, in some for many years, in some perhaps even to the day of judgment. But *because it is said they shall be saved—this fire is made light of,* saith St. Augustine (Psalm

(Psalm xxxvii.) *but surely though they shall be saved by it, yet is this fire more grievous, than whatsoever a man can suffer in this life.* Christians, see then how much you are enemies to your own souls, when for fear of hurting these sinful carcases, you neglect to punish your sins by mortifications and penance; and by this means reserve so much more fuel for this burning fire.

Consider 3dly, that however rigorous the divine justice is, in the punishment it inflicts, on account of sin, upon these souls that are in this state of a fiery purgation; yet their condition admits of many comforts, that are denied to the damned; which make an immense difference between the one fire and the other. For as these souls have departed this life, in the state of charity and grace; true penitents, though imperfect: they are here comforted with a good conscience, and with the assurance they have that they love God, and are loved by him: they know that they are his children, and under his protection: and that their sufferings will soon have an end; (for all time is short) and will terminate in the never-ending joys of a happy eternity. In the mean while, the love they have for God, gives them a perfect conformity with his blessed will, and a certain peace, content, and joy in all they suffer, because such is his will: they even desire that divine justice should be satisfied; and lovingly embrace those flames that are to purify them from the rust of sin, and to fit them for him. O how happy should we be, if under all our sufferings here, we entered into the like sentiments! Such a purgatory as this, of temporal sufferings, endured with resignation, humility, and love, would go a great way towards purifying our souls from our sins, and fitting them for heaven.

Conclude, since nothing impure can ever come to be united to the infinite purity of God, till it be first thoroughly purged, either in this world, or the next; to make it thy business, to get thyself thoroughly purified here; by penitential labours, by patience in suffering, and by fervour in the practice of all virtues, but especially of divine charity. For this will be to thee

thee a far more easy, mild and wholesome purgatory, than the dreadful fire of the world to come.

JULY 17. *On the terrors of the last day.*

CONSIDER first, that nothing can be conceived more terrible than the prospect the scripture gives us of the last accounting day, with all the prodigies that shall go before it. The sun shall be darkened, the moon red as blood; the stars without light, and seeming to fall from the firmament; the earth shall be shaken with violent earthquakes; the sea swelling and roaring with unusual tempests; the elements all in confusion, and whole nature in disorder. *The great day of the Lord is near, saith the prophet, (Sophon. i. 14, 15.) it is near, and exceeding swift:—That day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds, and whirlwinds, &c.* But oh! what will then be the thoughts of unhappy sinners, who shall see themselves threatened with all these frightful signs of the divine indignation? Alas! they will perfectly wither away, according to the expression of the gospel, *(Luke xxi. 26.) for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world; and through the apprehension of that dismal tragedy, which shall suddenly follow after these frightful preludes.*

Consider 2dly, that these terrors will chiefly affect the wicked, against whom they are all levelled: so that they shall then begin to say to the mountains: *fall upon us, and to the hills cover us, (Luke xxiii. 30.) and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?* Apoc. vi. 16, 17. But as for the true servants of God, who are his friends, and children; *when these things shall begin to come to pass, they are bid (Luke xxii. 28.) to lock up, and to lift up their heads; because their redemption is at hand.* And surely the more they love God, and take to heart the interest of the glory of Christ, and the coming of his everlasting kingdom; the
more

more will they rejoice at the approaches of that day, that shall be so glorious to him, and so happy for all his elect. The day, in which he shall be publickly acknowledged by the whole universe, for the great Lord and judge of all: the day, in which he will finally triumph over all his enemies, and make all his servants sharers in his triumph, and glory: the day in which he will put an end to the usurpation of Satan, and to the reign of sin and death; and send them all to their proper place, never to come out any more: the day in which he will abolish for ever the corruption of the flesh, together with the old man; and all the errors, and lying fooleries of a deluded, and deluding world; and will establish the eternal reign of incorruption, justice, and truth. In fine, the day, in which he will wonderfully renew both heaven and earth; and bring all his servants into the never-ending joy of their Lord. O when shall that happy day come!

Consider 3dly, that after all those frightful symptoms, above rehearsed, of the last agony, and final expiring of this sinful world: a fire shall come raging like a torrent; that will at once involve all the kingdoms of the earth in devouring flames; sweeping off, and consuming all it shall find upon the whole face of the globe, and reducing all to smoke and ashes. Where then, O ye worldlings, will be all these painted toys you are now so fond of? Where will be your gardens and palaces? Where your gold, and silver, your costly plate and jewels, your pompous equipages, and whatsoever else you seem to possess, in this *dream* of your mortal life? Alas! all these things will end in smoke; and when you wake you will find nothing in your hands. Ps: lxxv. *O that men would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end!* Deut. xxxiii. 29. Do thou at least, O my soul, learn to be wise, by the consideration of this last fire, that shall so suddenly put an end to all these worldly bubbles: and take thou care to provide for thyself, by laying up thy treasure in heaven; where alone it will be out of the reach of this fiery deluge.

Conclude

Conclude to be always afraid of sin; to fly and abhor it above all evils; and thou shalt have nothing to fear at the last day.

JULY 18. *On the general resurrection.*

CONSIDER first, that this world being now at an end, the Archangel shall sound the last trumpet; and with a loud voice will call for all the dead to arise, and to come to judgment: this voice shall at once be heard over all the universe, and presently obeyed: it shall pierce the highest heavens, and penetrate down to the lowest abyfs of hell. At this voice, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, by the almighty power of our great Creator, all the children of Adam, from the first to the last, shall arise from the dust; and every soul shall again be united to its own body, never more to part for eternity: that as the soul and body have in this world been partners in good, or evil; so they may in the world to come be sharers also in reward or punishment. Christians, let the sound of this last trumpet, always eccho in your ears.

Consider 2dly, the wonderful difference there will be, at the time of this general resurrection, between the bodies of the just and those of the wicked. The just will rise in bodies most beautiful, purer than the stars, brighter than the sun, immortal and impassible; but the wicked will rise in bodies, suitable to their deserts, foul, black, hideous, and every way loathsome and insupportable; immortal it is true, but to no other end than to endure immortal torments. Oh! what an inexpressible torture will it be to these wretched souls to be forced into such odious carcases; and to be condemned to an eternal confinement, in such a horrid, and filthy prison? O learn then my soul, to keep thy body now pure from the corruption of carnal sins, lest otherwise it come to be at that day a sad aggravation of thy never-ending misery.

Consider 3dly, with how much joy and delight, the souls of the just shall be again united to their bodies, which they have so long desired; and with what affection

fection they will embrace those old companions and partners of all their labours, of all their sufferings and mortifications; and now designed to share with them in the glory of the heavenly Sion, and to give no small addition to their everlasting happiness. But Oh! what dreadful curses will pass at the melancholy meeting of the souls and bodies of the reprobate! Accursed carrion, will the soul say, was it to gratify thee, and to indulge thy brutish inclinations, that I have forfeited the immortal joys of heaven? Ah! wretch, to give thee a filthy pleasure of a moment, I have damned both myself and thee to all eternity. O thrice accursed carcase, it is just, that thou who hast been the cause of my damnation, shouldst be my partner in eternal wo! But oughtest not thou rather, O unhappy soul, to be a thousand times over accursed by thy body, since it was thy business, and was in thy power, to have subjected its passions, and lusts, to the rules of reason and religion; and thou didst rather chuse for the sake of a momentary delight, to enslave thyself to its sensual inclinations, and so to purchase hell both for thyself and it? Ah Christians, let us at least learn to be wise, and to keep both our body and soul in good order here; that they both may be eternally happy together hereafter.

Conclude to prevent the terrours, that will seize the wicked at that great summons, of the last trumpet, which shall call the dead from their graves, to go forth to meet the judge; by giving ear now to another summons of the great trumpet of the Holy Ghost, calling upon thee by the Apostle (*Eph. v. 14.*) *Rise thou who sleepest, and arise from the dead* (that is, from the death of sin, to the life of grace) *and Christ will enlighten thee.* Thus by *having part in the first resurrection*, thou wilt provide in time, against that great day, when *time shall be no more.* Thus thou shalt escape the *second death.*

JULY 19. *On the coming of the judge.*

CONSIDER first, that the dead being risen, shall immediately be assembled together from all places, to meet the judge: and this, as it is thought, near Jerusalem, in the sight of mount Olivet, and of mount Calvary, where our Lord heretofore shed his blood for our redemption. O! what a sight will it be to behold here all the children of Adam, an innumerable multitude of all nations, ages, and conditions, standing together, without any distinction now of rich or poor, great or little, master or servant, monarch or subject; excepting only the distinction of *good* and *bad*, which will be wonderful and eternal. Alas! how mean a figure will an *Alexander*, or a *Cesar*, make at this appearance; or any of those celebrated heroes of antiquity, whose very name has made whole nations tremble? Those mighty monarchs, that had once the world at their beck, are now levelled with the meanest of their slaves, and would wish a thousand times, they had never worn the diadem. And hast thou, my soul, never well considered, the part thou shalt have to act in this last scene?

Consider 2dly, how the great judge will immediately make his appearance; and every *eye shall see him*, coming down from heaven, *with great power and majesty*; armed with all the terrors of his justice, and surrounded with all his heavenly legions. O how different from his first coming, will this his second appearance be! His first coming was with wonderful meekness and humility; because that was *our day*, in which he came to redeem us by his *mercy*: but at his second coming, it will be *his day*, in which his *justice* will take place, to revenge upon sinful man the cause of his injured *mercy*, with a final vengeance once for all. Ah miserable sinners! How will you then be able to stand before his face, or bear his wrathful countenance? How will you then wish to hide your guilty heads, even in the lowest hell, rather than to endure this dreadful appearance? But all in vain: you must stand it out.

Consider

Consider 3dly, how upon this occasion the royal standard of the cross (*the sign of the Son of man*) will be carried before the Judge, shining more bright than the sun, to the unspeakable comfort of the good; and the intolerable anguish and confusion of the wicked; for having made so little advantage of the inestimable benefit of their redemption. Here they shall plainly see, what their God has suffered for their salvation: and how great has been his love for them; that boundless and unparalleled love, which brought him down from his throne of glory, and nailed him to the cross. O how will they now condemn their past obstinacy in sin, with all their blindness and ingratitude! O how will this glorious ensign justify, in the face of the whole universe, the conduct of God, and the dreadful torments he has prepared for unrepenting sinners! For what less than a miserable eternity can be punishment enough for so much obstinacy in sin, after so much goodness and love?

Conclude to take care, whilst thou hast time, to make a proper provision for this great appearance, by turning now to God, with thy whole heart, and embracing a penitential life: for why shouldst thou go on any longer, adding daily sin to sin, and so *treasuring up to thyself wrath against this day of wrath?* Rom. ii. 5.

JULY 20. *On the separation of the good and the bad.*

CONSIDER first, how the sovereign Judge, being seated on his glorious throne aloft in the air, attended with all his millions of millions of Angels, in their different orders and hierarchies, will presently give his command, which shall be instantly obeyed, for the final and eternal separation of the good from the bad: after which these two companies shall never, never more meet. Then shall all the true servants of God, *be caught up in the clouds, to Christ in the air*; 1 Thes. iv. 16, and be placed with honour on his right hand: and such of them as, like the Apostles, have in their lifetime quitted all things else to follow him, will also take their seats with him, as judges both of Angels and

men, *Matt. xix. 25. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.* But all the wicked, together with the devils, whom they have followed, shall be driven with ignominy to the left hand. And thou, my soul, where dost thou expect to stand at that day? In which of these two companies shalt thou be ranked? Thou hast it now in thy choice; but shalt not have it then. Choose then now, in *this thy day*, that *better part, that will never be taken from thee*, Luke x.

Consider 2dly, what will then be the thoughts of the grandees of the world, of the rich, of the worldly wise, of the great heroes, of the fine ladies, &c. when they shall see the poor in spirit, the meek, the humble, that were so contemptible in their eyes, when they were here in this mortal life, now honoured and exalted; and crowned with immortal glory, dignity, strength and beauty: but themselves depressed to the lowest extremity of disgrace, contempt, and irremediable want of all things. O! what horror, what confusion, what envy, what rage, will oppress their souls to see this strange catastrophe! O what will then be their sentiments of all those empty toys, which they had been so fond of in their life-time! How will they now condemn their own madness, in having set their hearts upon those lying follies; to the eternal loss of their immortal souls! How will they now wish a thousand and a thousand times, they had followed the examples of the Saints, and walked in the charming paths of virtue and devotion!

Consider 3dly, in what manner, the sentiments, which the wicked will have on this occasion, are expressed by the Spirit of God, (*Wisdom v.*) *These seeing it (viz. the glorious exaltation of the just) shall be troubled with horrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation: saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: these are they whom we had heretofore in derision, and for a parable of reproach: we fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour: behold how they are numbered among the children of God; and their lot is among the Saints.*

Saints. Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us: we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction; and we have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? Or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on, and as a ship that passeth through the waves, whereof, when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found—so we being born forthwith ceased to be, and have been able to shew no mark of virtue: but are consumed in our wickedness. Ah! Christians, mark well these speeches of the reprobate, and take effectual measures whilst you have time, that their misfortune may never be yours.

Conclude to fly now from the midst of Babylon: by standing off from the corruption and infection of a wicked world; and separating yourselves from the society of the wicked, in time; that you may not be involved in their eternal misery.

JULY 21. On the opening of the books.

CONSIDER first, what we read in the word of God, of the opening of the books, when God will sit down to judge, *Daniel vii. I beheld, saith the prophet, till thrones were placed, and the ancient of days sat down.—Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him: the judgment sat, and THE BOOKS WERE OPENED. And Revel, xx. 11, 12. I saw a great white throne, saith St. John, and one sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and THE BOOKS WERE OPENED: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Christians, attend to these awful truths: and think well on these books, by the contents of which*

you are to be judged. The study of these will be of infinitely more importance to you, than the knowledge of all the books of the belles lettres, and human sciences, which must all perish in the last fire.

Consider 2dly, what these books are, which will be produced, and set open at the day of judgment. In the first place, there will be the books of our consciences: with all the divine records, in which our thoughts, words and actions, are punctually registered. In the second place, the books of the gospel, of the rules of life prescribed by Jesus Christ, and of the commandments of God. And lastly *the book of life*; even that book, in the first line of which it is written of Jesus Christ (*Pf. xxxix.*) that he should *come, to do his Father's will*; and in which the names of all stand recorded, under the name of Jesus Christ, who with him, and through him, have made it the main business of their life, to do the will of him, and of his Father; and who have embraced the law of his love in the very midst of their hearts. Christians, examine yourselves now by these books; judge yourselves now by these books: and all will be well with you then. See how your accounts now stand in your own conscience: but O! beware of the delusions of self-love. Reflect how all your thoughts, words and actions, in the moment they go from you, are presently enrolled in the divine books. Ah! in what condition are yours to appear there! Will your life be able to stand the trial of the book of the gospel? Or will not rather your faith rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you, for having renounced in practice what you professed to believe? Has your name any place in the book of life, where none are entered but such as do the will of God?

Consider 3dly, how upon the opening these books, the sins of the reprobate shall not only all appear, in their most odious shapes, to their own eyes; but also be exposed to the public view of that whole immense assembly, of all heaven and earth; visible and evident to the eyes of all, both angels and men, good and bad.

Ah!

Ah! poor sinner, where wilt thou then hide thy head? What shame, what anguish will oppress thee, when all thy filth and abominations, all thy works of darkness, which thou hadst committed in the greatest secrecy, and which thou wouldst not have had known to thy friends and acquaintance for all the world; and perhaps couldst not find in thy heart to disclose, even to one person, tied by all laws to an eternal secrecy, shall now be displayed before thy face, with all their aggravating circumstances, in this great consistory of the whole universe?

Conclude to prevent by a hearty repentance, and a sincere confession of all thy guilt; now whilst thou hast time, the dreadful confusion, which otherwise thou must suffer at that day: and the great judge will then ratify the absolution, that has been given thee here, by virtue of his commission, and clear thee from all thy sins.

JULY 22. *On the conversion of St. Mary Magdalene.*
Luke vii.

CONSIDER first, the sudden and wonderful change God was pleased to work in the heart of this glorious penitent. *Behold a woman in the city, that was a sinner, (says St. Luke) when she knew that Jesus was at meat in the house of the Pharisee, brought an alabaster box of ointment: and standing behind at his feet she began to wash his feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hairs of her head, and she kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.* Luke vii. 37, 38. See here, my soul, a penitent indeed; thoroughly penetrated with the sense of the dreadful evil of her sins, and therefore not to be restrained, either by shame or fear, or any considerations, of what the world would think, or say, from running immediately to her Saviour; though then at table, and in the midst of the Pharisees; and there to do publick penance, without regard to their censures, or contempt. O see what it is for a soul to have her eyes truly opened, to discover the deformity of her sins, and to view those odious

monsters, in their true shape, which have so long possessed her! She thinks every moment an age, till by running to our Lord, she can get rid of her guilt; whatever it may cost her, or whoever may scoff at her, or censure her for it.

Consider 2dly, the chiefest ingredients in Magdalene's conversion; her faith, her humility, her love, her penitential tears; and her dedicating now to the service of her Lord, all that she had before employed in sin. Her *faith*, joined with her humble confidence in the goodness, and mercy of her Saviour, appears in her running to him, to be washed and cleansed by him from all her filth, in the true fountain of life. Her *humility* appears in her not daring to come before his face, nor to address herself to him in words: but standing behind at his feet, and speaking to his heart by floods of tears. Her ardent *love* shews itself, in her often kissing his feet, and in the *penitential tears* it produces; and is therefore taken notice of by our Lord, as the main disposition towards her justification: *Many sins are forgiven her*, said he, *for she hath loved much.* verse 47. And now her hair, her precious ointments, her whole person, are wholly dedicated to her Saviour: to whom from this time forward she adheres, with such an inviolable fidelity, and unalterable affection, as not even to suffer herself to be kept off from him, either by the ignominy of the cross, or the horror of the sepulchre. See sinners, what it is to be a perfect convert, what it is to be a penitent indeed.

Consider 3dly, the lessons all Christians may learn from Magdalene's conversion. And first, a sense of the wonderful mercies of God, who thus changes, in an instant, the greatest sinners into the greatest Saints: that so we may never despair of the conversion of any one; nor ever presume to despise poor sinners, how abandoned soever; or to prefer ourselves before any of them; since whatever they are to-day, to-morrow they may be great penitents, and great favourites of heaven. Secondly, we must learn, from this great example, a ready compliance with the graces and calls of
God;

God; with a courage, and resolution to overcome the opposition, we shall be sure to meet with in our return to God, from old habits, human respects, or any other considerations. Alas! if Magdalene had regarded the censures of the world, or delayed her conversion, for fear of what the Pharisees would say or think of her, in all appearance, she would have died in her sins. Thirdly, we may learn by her example, that the most effectual means for the remission of all our sins, and the advancing our souls to the perfection of all holiness, is an ardent love of our blessed Redeemer; and a repentance influenced by love. Happy we, if we can but learn of her, to go daily in this penitential spirit to the feet of Christ! He never rejects a penitent lover.

Conclude, if thou hast followed Magdalene in her sins, to imitate her also in her conversion: and the more, and the greater thy sins have been, to make the greater return of love to him, who has so mercifully spared thee in thy sins, and so lovingly forgiven thee that immense debt, which thou owedst to his justice.

JULY 23. *On the last sentence of the good,*

CONSIDER first, that the great assizes of the last day will be concluded by a definitive sentence: by which the just, after a glorious rehearsal of all their good works, will be called up to a kingdom where sorrows never enter, and joys never end; and the wicked will be condemned to the dismal dungeons of everlasting fire. But first give ear, O my soul, to that sweet and amiable invitation, (which thou hopest shall be one day thine) by which their dear Lord will call all his servants, his friends, and his children, into the glorious mansions of eternal bliss. *Come ye blessed of my Father,* will he say; *possess the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.* Matt. xxv. 34. O happy invitation! O happy; thrice happy, they, that shall be found worthy to partake of this joyful sentence! What unspeakable satisfaction and delight, what torrents of joy, and pleasure, will flow into their souls, at the hearing of it! But oh! What envy, what rage will possess
the

the souls of the reprobate, when they shall hear this invitation, and shall see several of their own acquaintance going to take possession of that eternal kingdom; which they might also have so easily purchased; but by their folly and stupidity, have blindly exchanged for the flames of hell?

Consider 2dly, and weigh well at thy leisure, the words of this happy sentence: *Come*, says the judge, *ye blessed of my Father, &c. Come*, (O sweet invitation!) from the vale of tears, to the blissful regions of never-ending joys. Come from a tedious banishment, to your true heavenly country: from your mortal pilgrimage, in the midst of crosses, labours, conflicts and dangers, to your blessed home, in the fair and lovely mansions of rest and peace, in the eternal Sion: where you shall meet with all that your heart can desire, to compleat your happiness; where you shall be for ever inebriated by the plenty of my house; and drink for ever at the fountain of life. *Arise, my beloved, the winter is now past*, the floods and storms are all over, *arise and come. Come enter into the joy of your Lord; the kingdom is prepared for you*, from the beginning; an universal good, a *blessing* including all blessings; and extended to endless ages. O my soul, learn to despise all other happiness, in hopes of having a share, one day, in this blessed sentence.

Consider 3dly, that what is most to be admired and loved in this heavenly sentence, is that it brings our souls to an eternal union with God himself, our only true and sovereign good. This *come*, this sweet word of salvation, draws us to our God, unites us to him, receives us into the very bosom of his goodness: and in a manner transforms us into him. And nothing less could ever truly satisfy our souls! O happy *blessing* indeed, to be thus *blessed of the Father*; by an eternal union with himself. O happy *kingdom*, in which we shall eternally live and reign with the ever living God! *Rejoiced*, said the royal prophet, *Pf. cxxi. at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord.* But O my soul, how much more oughtest thou

to rejoice at the happy prospect of thy being one day called, not only into the house of the Lord, but even to a union with the Lord himself?

Conclude to spare no pains to secure to thyself this happy sentence by a diligence in all good works, more especially works of mercy, and charity; which by the gospel, are particularly entitled to the sentence of the elect.

JULY 24. *On the last sentence of the wicked.*

CONSIDER first, how the great judge, after having invited the just to his glorious kingdom: turning himself towards the wicked on his left hand, with fire in his eyes, and terrour in his countenance, will thunder out against them the dreadful sentence of their irrevocable doom, in these words. *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. O sinners, weigh well every word of this frightful sentence. *Depart*, saith he, *go*, be gone for ever, *far from me*; far from the joys of my kingdom, and the society of my children, into the place you have chosen, and blindly preferred before heaven; into the darksome dungeons of hell below, prepared for Satan and his associates, whose part you have taken against me. O terrible excommunication, to be cut off for ever from the society of Jesus Christ, and his Saints! O cruel divorce, to be eternally separated from God, and all that is good? O dismal and everlasting banishment, to be excluded from the city of God, and sent into the low and horrid region of *the second death*? Ah! wretches, who make so little now of losing God, and his grace, by mortal sin; what will you then think, when you shall be doomed to this eternal separation from the source of all good! But whither are you to go from him? Alas! *into everlasting fire*, there to burn as long as God is God, in the company of *the devil and his angels*. O dreadful eternity!

Consider 2dly, that terrible and universal curse, which this sentence of condemnation involves. *Depart from*

from me, you cursed, says the sovereign judge: as if he should say, you shall go from me, but take my *curse* along with you. I would have given you my *blessing*; but you would not receive it: a *curse* you have chosen; and a *curse* shall be your everlasting lot. It shall stick close to you, like a garment, which you shall never put off; it shall enter into your very bowels, and search into the very marrow of your bones. A *curse* upon your eyes, never to see the least glimpse of comfortable light: a *curse* upon your ears, to hear no other musick for all eternity, but frightful shrieks and groans: a *curse* on your taste, to be ever embittered with the gall of dragons: a *curse* on your smell, to be always tormented with the intolerable stench of the bottomless pit: a *curse* on your feeling, and on all the members of your body, to be for ever burning, and never to consume, in a fire that shall never be quenched. O dreadful complication of irremediable evils!

Consider 3dly, that this terrible *curse* will not only be extended to the body, and all its senses and members: it will also reach the soul, and all its powers and faculties. As if the great judge should also say: a *curse* upon your understanding, never to be enlightened with any ray of truth: a *curse* upon your will, never to attain to any thing it loves or desires, but to be always bound down to what it hates and abhors: a *curse* upon your memory, to be ever revolving, in the bitterness of a fruitless repentance, the folly and vanity of all those short lived pleasures, and worldly toys, for which you have forfeited a happy eternity: a *curse* upon your conscience, to be ever gnawed by the worm that never dies: a *curse* upon your whole soul, to be a hell to itself; ever torn in pieces with most violent passions, of fury, envy, hatred and despair. Good God! let me never be so miserable as to incur this dreadful and irrevocable curse. But see how this sentence is no sooner pronounced, but the earth opens, and swallows down at once, all this wretched multitude, with the devils that seduced them, into the lowest hell: and then *the gate is shut* upon them, never, never to be opened! O
the

the fatal consequences of all worldly pride! O the dismal end of carnal pleasures!

Conclude to turn now to God with thy whole heart; and henceforward inseparably adhere to him: thus thou wilt secure to thyself a *bleffing* at that day, instead of a curse.

JULY 25. *On St. JAMES.*

CONSIDER first, that St. James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of St. John the Apostle was one of those disciples, to whom our Lord was pleased to shew a more particular favour and love: he was one of the three, that were chosen to be witnesses of the glory of his transfiguration: one of the three, that were admitted to be present, when he raised to life the daughter of Jairus: and one of the three, whom he took along with him, to stay, and watch with him in his prayer and agony in the garden. O how great must the faith, and love of St. James have been, that he should be such a favourite of Jesus? How happy are they, who like St. James, keep close to Jesus, in his sorrows and sufferings, no less than in his joys and glory! The zeal, and fervour, of St. James, and of his brother St. John in the cause of Christ, obtained for them, from our Lord, the surname of *Boanerges* or *sons of thunder*. This glorious name they made good in their preaching, and in their labours: and St. James, with this advantage, that he was the first of all the Apostles who laid down his life for the love of his master, and sealed his doctrine with his blood. O glorious death! to die for love, not of any mortal beauty, or worldly honour, or friends, or country; but for the love of our Lord, the true and everlasting life. O how happy are all those sufferings, that are endured for the love of Christ!

Consider 2dly, from the epistle of this day, (1 Cor. iv.) what kind of sufferings St. James and his fellow Apostles endured daily for the love of Christ, and with what patience and charity, they supported them. *I think, says St. Paul, that God hath set forth us Apostles, the last, as*

it were men appointed to death: because we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake—we are weak—we are without honour. Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode: and we labour, working with our own hands: we are reviled, and we bless: we are persecuted, and we suffer it: we are ill spoken of, and we entreat: we are made as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all, even until now, See, Christians, in what manner the greatest favourites of heaven were treated by the children of the world. But no wonder: for their master himself was treated no better: and all who desire to reign with him, must be content to suffer with him. O happy those crosses which bring the soul to the eternal enjoyment of her God!

Consider 3dly, from the gospel of this festival, that St. James and St. John, though they had been now trained up for three years in the school of Christ, yet before his passion and death, and their receiving the Holy Ghost, had not yet perfectly put off the old man, or purged away the old leaven of ambition and self-seeking, and therefore they induced their mother to petition for them, that they might sit, the one on the right hand of Christ, the other on the left, in his kingdom. Christians, beware of ambition, beware of desiring to be honoured, to be praised, to be exalted, or preferred before others: beware of all the subtleties of pride, and self-love: if it found its way even into the school of Christ, (as it had done before, into the earthly paradise, and even into heaven itself) it is recorded as a warning for us; that so dangerous and subtle an evil, may not make its way with far greater ease, into our unguarded souls. But hearken to the words of our Lord, upon this occasion. *You know not, says he, what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I shall drink? &c.* O how true it is that *we know not what we ask*, when we ask for honours, preferments, riches, pleasures, &c. which instead of bringing us nearer to our God, are too apt to carry us away from him! It is
drinking

drinking with Christ of the chalice of his passion; it is taking up our cross, and following him, is the true means, of divine appointment, which is to bring us to Christ, and to entitle us to sit down with him on his throne; and to reign eternally with him.

Conclude to let it be thy great ambition, to keep as close as thou canst to thy Lord, with thy cross upon thy shoulders, by diligent working, suffering and loving: and instead of pretending to high things, sit thee down, by humility, in the lowest place, and the highest will be given thee.

JULY 26. *On St. ANN.*

CONSIDER first, that what gives us the highest idea of the super-eminent sanctity of St. Ann, and of her blessed consort St. Joachim, is that they were chosen by the decrees of heaven, to be the parents of that immaculate virgin, who was to bring forth the Saviour of the world, and to be the mother of God. O what graces did they not receive, to qualify them to furnish this virgin-spouse to the Spirit of God, and this virgin-mother to the Son of God! What a saint-like, what a heavenly education, did they not give to their blessed child! How perfectly did they make good thereby that sentence of their divine grandson, that *the tree is to be known by the fruits!* What reverence then, what esteem, what affection, what devotion, do we not owe to this blessed couple! All the true children of Christ have ever loved his mother, and considered her as their mother: how then can we do otherwise than love also these two great Saints, to whom we stand indebted for such a mother?

Consider 2dly, from the lesson, or epistle, that is read on the feast of St. Ann, (out of *Proverbs xxxi.*) the properties of a *valiant*, that is, of a wise and virtuous woman, as all perfectly agreeing to this great Saint: particularly, her perpetual attention to do good, and not evil, *all the days of her life*; her unwearied industry in acquiring the spiritual riches of all virtues; and storing up a treasure for eternity; her diligence in the exercise

of the works of mercy and charity: &c. *Strength and beauty are her cloathing*, saith the wise man, speaking of her interiour, *and she shall laugh in the last day*: (even in that day when the foolish admirers of worldly vanities will all be sad and sorrowful) *She hath opened her mouth to wisdom, and the law of clemency is on her tongue*: (By her being ever prudent in her words, and charitably compassionate in excusing the defects of her neighbours.) *She hath looked well to the paths of her house; and hath not eaten her bread idle*: (by a serious application to keep herself always well employed, and to see that all under her charge are orderly.) Such was St. Ann, such ought all Christian matrons to be: of such as these the Spirit of God adds in the conclusion of the chapter: *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands: and let her works praise her in the gates.* Yes the Lord himself will give her the eternal reward of the fruit of her hands: and the gates of the heavenly Sion will resound with her praises for ever.

Consider gdly, from the gospel of this day, that excellent *treasure* which St. Ann found, and made her own, by giving up all things else to purchase it for herself. *The kingdom of heaven*, says our Lord, Matt. xiii. 44. *is like unto a treasure hidden in a field: which when a man hath found, he hideth it, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* The *kingdom of heaven*, in this, and other passages of the gospel, is understood of *the kingdom of God within us*, by his grace in the soul; that kingdom, by which he lives, and reigns in our interiour, by faith, hope, and love, and the spirit of recollection and prayer. Now this kingdom of God in our souls is a *treasure* indeed, of infinite value, which enriches us by the possession of God himself, here by grace, and hereafter in glory. This *treasure* is *hidden* from the children of the world, who are strangers to the value of it, and have a very mean idea of the happiness of a spiritual and internal life: but the children of God, whose eyes are opened

to the truth, discover this inestimable treasure; and spare neither pains, nor cost, to get it into their own possession: they *even sell all they have, to purchase it*; that is, they give up their humours, their passions, their worldly affections, their sensual inclinations, their own will, and every thing else that opposes so great a happiness: and thus this kingdom of God becomes their own; and they themselves become God's kingdom. Thus they begin to enjoy a heaven upon earth.

Conclude to *seek first this kingdom of God in thy soul, above all things; and all other things shall be added unto thee*: thou shalt also be reimbursed, with infinite advantage, whatever thou hast expended in the purchase of it; and *all good things shall come to thee along with it.*

JULY 27. *On Hell.*

CONSIDER first, that it will be of no small service to thee, in order to keep thee from going down into hell after thy death, if thou wilt now, by a serious meditation, go down thither whilst thou art alive; and take a view of that wretched place, by the help of those lights, with which the unerring word of God furnishes thee. Give ear then first to what is said of hell, in the Old-testament: where it is called, Job. x. *A land (from which there is no coming back) dark, and covered with the obscurity of death: a land of misery, and darkness; where the shadow of death, and no order; but everlasting horror dwelleth.* And Isai. xxx. 33. where it is called *Topheth* (from the name of that dismal valley, near Jerusalem, otherwise called Gehenna, where the idolaters burnt their children in sacrifice to the devil) of which he says: *Topheth is prepared from yesterday; prepared by the king, deep and wide. The nourishments thereof is fire, and much wood; the breath of the Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindleth it.* And what kind of torments are there prepared for the wicked; the same prophet informs us, Chap. xxxiii. 14. When he puts the question to them, *which of you can dwell with devouring fire? which of you can endure everlasting burn-*

ings? The wise man adds, Eccclus xxxix. *That there are spirits that are created for vengeance, and in their fury they lay on grievous torments: in the time of destruction they shall pour out their forces, and shall appease the wrath of him that made them. Fire, hail, famine and death all these were created for vengeance: the teeth of beasts and scorpions, and serpents.*

Consider edly, what a description our Lord himself has given us of hell in his Gospel: where he calls it *the gehenna of fire, or the fiery gehenna.* St. Matt. v. *A fire that cannot be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished: and where every one shall be salted with fire,* St. Mark ix. *An eternal fire, and everlasting punishment,* St. Matt. xxv. *A place of torments in flames, where the wicked shall not be allowed even so much as one drop of water to cool their tongue,* St. Luke xvi. *A furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,* St. Matt. xiii. *A binding hand and foot, and casting into exterior darkness,* St. Matt. xxii. To which St. John adds, Revel. xiv. *that the damned, shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God—and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone—and that the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever: and that they have no rest day nor night,* Revel. xx. *That they shall be cast into the pool of fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* To which St. Jude also adds *darkness and everlasting chains,* verse 6. And St. Paul, 2 Thes. 1. *That they shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction, from the face of the Lord.*

Consider 3dly, what a dreadful scene of misery and woe is here set before our eyes, in these texts of holy scripture: what a complication of all the worst of evils, and all of them eternal: how many bitter ingredients of this cup of the divine wrath, of which the wicked must drink in hell, for evermore. Take a view of them, O my soul, at thy leisure, that the sight of them may imprint in thee a wholesome fear of sin, the only evil that can condemn thee to that place of torments. O! Consider well this dying life, or rather this living death, of the damned in this darksome land; these dungeons

geons of horreur and misery; this binding hand and foot, in eternal chains; this pool of fire and brimstone; this salting with fire; these devouring flames; which always burn, and yet never consume; this feeling ever fresh for sufferings; these gnawing serpents; this worm that never dies; this dreadful second death; this eternal separation from God, and all that is good; this perpetual weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth; &c. and that all this is endured in the company of devils, and other damned wretches, all hating and cursing one another; all hating and blaspheming God. And that all these insupportable sufferings, are to be without end, intermission, or remission: Ah! such is hell according to holy writ; according to God's infallible word: And who can bear the least part of it? And shall Christians, that believe the word of God, dare to sin?

Conclude, seeing thou canst endure so little here, to take the most effectual means thou art able, now whilst thou hast time, to keep thyself from ever coming into this place of torments. The fire of hell can burn nothing but wilful sin. Get rid of this enormous evil; and hell can have no hold on thee.

JULY 28. *Some other considerations on hell.*

CONSIDER first, that as it is said in holy writ, *1 Cor. ii. 9. that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive, what things God has prepared for them that love him:* so we may also say with truth, that neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of any mortal, to conceive what dreadful torments, are prepared in hell, for obstinate sinners, that wilfully die enemies of God. The Almighty is infinite in all his attributes: as in his power, wisdom, goodness, &c. so in his avenging justice too. He is a God in hell, as much as in heaven. So that by the greatness of his love, mercy and patience here; we may measure the greatness of his future wrath, and vengeance against impenitent sinners. By his pure goodness and love, he has drawn them out of nothing, and made them for him-

self, and a happy eternity; he has preserved them, and sustained them, for a long time, ever loading them with his benefits; he has even come down from his throne of glory, to seek them when gone astray; he has suffered himself to be nailed to a disgraceful cross for their eternal salvation; he has frequently delivered them from the dangers to which they were daily exposed; has patiently borne with their repeated insolencies and treasons; still graciously inviting them to return to him by repentance; and still offering them his mercy, and all good, both for time and eternity. Ah! How justly then does his patience and goodness, after being so long abused, turn into fury? His mercy at length gives place to justice: and a thousand woes to those wretches, that must for ever feel the dreadful weight of the avenging hand of the living God.

Consider 2dly, that beatitude, according to divines, is defined. *A perfect and never ending state of happiness, comprizing at once all that is good, without any mixture of evil.* If then damnation be the opposite to beatitude, it must needs be an everlasting deluge of all that is evil, without the least mixture of good, without the least alloy of ease, without the least glimpse of comfort; a total privation of all happiness, and a chaos of all misery.

Consider 3dly, that the misery of the damned is *unchangeable*. Because they carry with them out of this world the enormous guilt of mortal sin; an infinite debt, of which they can never discharge the least part; a dreadful poison, which has tainted and corrupted their whole souls, for which there is now no medicine; a dismal stain which has penetrated them through and through, and never can be effaced; which is even proof against all the flames of hell, which it continually nourishes; and all the gnawings of the never dying worm, which eternally preys upon it. For as there is no remission of sins in hell, the whole guilt remains unchangeably in the soul, with all the debt, and all the stain; and consequently calls, without ceasing, for all the wrath of God's avenging justice; which cannot but

but eternally hate, and eternally punish everlasting sin. Oh! how true it is, that this dreadful evil of mortal sin, is the very worst of all the ingredients of eternal damnation; and the source and cause of all the rest!

Conclude ever to detest, and fly from this monster sin: which is thus odious to thy God; and pernicious to thy soul; and thou shalt have no need to apprehend eternal damnation.

JULY 29. *On the prison of hell.*

CONSIDER first, that hell is a prison, that lies deep in the bowels of the earth, in which the damned are confined for all eternity: a prison, whose gates are eternally shut down, and bolted upon them, by the irreversible decrees of heaven; so as to prohibit for ever to them all intercourse, or communication, with the world above; to stop up all access to all manner of good, comfort, or ease; and to shut in with them all that can make them compleatly miserable. Hell is a dismal dungeon of black and stinking fire; and crammed brim-full with the black and stinking carcases of the damned, eternally frying in those dark flames. O my soul, what a prison! What a dungeon! What dreadful locks, and bars, which shut out all good, and admit of nothing of God, but his avenging justice!

Consider 2dly, that this prison of the damned is every way most hideous and loathsome; and full of horror and darkness. No sun, no moon, no stars ever appear in that gloomy region: but a dismal night reigns eternally there; a night that knows no morning, nor ever expects a return of the dawning of the day. No breath of air from above, no glimpse of light can ever penetrate, into that deep, that bottomless pit. The very fire that rages there is black and darksome; it affords no light, to the wretched prisoners, except it be to represent to their eyes such odious objects, as may serve to increase their misery. O who can bear the thought of such a scene of woe!

Consider

Consider 3dly, that in this frightful dungeon, the damned are bound down in eternal chains, so that they can neither stir *hand* nor *foot*; St. Matt. xxii: in fiery chains, that wrap up their whole bodies, and penetrate them on all sides, and fix them immoveably to their place of torments. That head, which by their pride, and rebellion, they had lifted up against God, is now eternally nailed down, at an immense distance from him: that stiff neck, which they refused to submit to his sweet yoke, is now loaded with the enormous weight of the chains of hell: and all their senses and members, which they gratified in their life, by indulging them the false liberty of sinful pleasures, are now condemned to an everlasting confinement and slavery, in links of grinding flames. Oh that sinners would be wise, and would think of these things, and would cease from sin!

Conclude thou at least, my soul, to take care of one, and whilst thou hast time, to provide effectually for thy eternal welfare; that thou mayest never come to be cast into this dreadful and everlasting prison.

JULY 30. *On the entertainments of hell.*

CONSIDER first, what kind of entertainments are prepared, in a miserable eternity; to succeed the banquets, and revellings, and other extravagancies of a voluptuous life, in which worldlings pass the short time of their mortality. O how strangely will the scene be altered, when immediately after death they shall find their souls buried in hell! Ah! what kind of feasting shall they meet with there! What ravenous hunger and thirst, without being ever able to obtain so much as one drop of water! *Their wine is the gall of dragons, and the venom of asps which is incurable.* Deut. xxxii. 33. *Their cups are full of the wine of the wrath of God.* Revel. xiv. Cups of liquid fire, and stinking sulphur. Their gardens of pleasures, are turned into a *pool of fire and brimstone.* Their carnal embraces into the eternal gnawings of infernal serpents, ever preying upon their bosoms.

Consider

Consider 2dly, the musick, with which these wretches shall be for ever entertained in hell: eternal howlings and yellings; eternal shrieks, and groans; eternal curses and blasphemies; the insulting voices of the tormenters, scoffing at their sufferings; the lashes of their scourges, &c. Ah! unhappy sinners, how will you like such entertainments as these? Surely if there were nothing else in hell, but the being condemned to an everlasting night, in the midst of all this horror and confusion of so many frightful noises, dismal groans, and horrid blasphemies; any reasonable man would choose the worst of temporal evils, rather than be condemned for eternity to such a melancholy entertainment.

Consider 3dly, that the sense of smelling, in the damned, will also have its share in this infernal feast: where it shall be forever regaled with the loathsome exhalations of those filthy dungeons below, and with the intolerable stench of those half putrified carcases, that are broiling there. And what will come in to compleat the misery of their entertainment, will be the abominable company, which they must have with them for endless ages, of so many hideous spirits; so many merciless devils; and what will be worse to them than devils, the unhappy partners of their sins. O what bitter hatred, what hellish rage and fury, shall their former love be now turned into? O how will they now curse, how will they tear and torment one another; being eternally chained together, in those black fiery links, which by their dark passions and lusts, they have in their life time made for themselves. O worldlings, break then your bonds in sunder now, whilst you have time; withdraw yourselves now from all the objects of your criminal passions, and all disorderly affections; lest if you carry them with you out of this world, they serve for nothing else but to add so many fiery links to your everlasting chains, and to bind you down to as many devils.

Conclude to fly for the future from a voluptuous life, and all the sinful entertainments of the children of this world;

world; *who have their consolation here; and who laugh now, but shall mourn and weep hereafter*, St. Luke vi. and for thy part, to lament henceforward the share thou hast had with them, whilst thou hast walked on with them in the broad road of a worldly life: and by these penitential tears, joined with a new life, thou wilt escape having a share with them in the entertainments of hell.

JULY 31. *On the fire of hell.*

CONSIDER first, that in hell, every vice will meet with its peculiar torment. There the proud will be debased, confounded, and trodden under foot by insulting devils. There the covetous, and the lovers of the mammon of this world, will groan under the extremity of want and misery. There the lascivious shall exchange their dark and filthy pleasures, for stinking sulphur, and black flames. There gluttons and drunkards shall be oppressed with an insupportable hunger and thirst; and so of the rest. But the general punishment of all the damned, and that which is most frequent inculcated in holy writ, is that they shall *burn*, in everlasting fire. O who can endure the thought of this eternal burning, in that dreadful pool of fire and brimstone! Christians, what are you doing? Do you believe this eternal fire; and do you dare to sin? If you believe it not, you are no Christians: and if you believe, it, and still persist going on in such sins as you know are the high road to this everlasting burning, you must be worse than madmen.

Consider 2dly, that of all bodily torments, which we can suffer in this world, there is none more terrible than to be burned alive. But alas there is no comparison between burning here, and burning in hell. All our fires upon earth are but painted flames, if compared to the fire of hell. The fire of this world was made to serve us, and to be our comfort: that of hell was created to be an instrument of God's vengeance upon sinners. The fire of this world cannot subsist, without being nourished by some combustible matter, which it quickly

quickly dispatches and consumes: the fire of hell, kindled by the breath of an angry God, requires no other fuel than sin, and on this it feeds without ever decaying or consuming. The fire of this world can only reach the body; but the fire of hell not only pierces the body through and through, in all its members, and penetrates into all the inward parts, with most exquisite tortures; but also reaches the soul herself, in her very inmost recesses, with its searching flames. Ah! who could endure such a fire as this even for one moment? How much less for an endless eternity?

Consider 3dly, that there is no man upon earth, that has not quite lost his senses, who would be willing, even for the empire of the world, to be broiled like a Laurence, on a gridiron, or roasted for half an hour by a slow fire; though he was sure to come off with his life. Nay where is the man that would even venture to hold his finger in the flame of a candle for half a quarter of an hour, for any reward this world can give. Where is then the judgment of the greatest part of Christians, who pretend to believe hell fire, and yet live on, with so little apprehension and concern, and that oftentimes for years together, in the guilt of mortal sin, in danger every moment of falling into this dreadful and everlasting fire; having no more all this while than a hairs breadth, that is, the thin thread of an uncertain life, between their souls and a miserable eternity? Good God, deliver us, from this wretched blindness, from this desperate folly and madness.

Conclude never to expose thyself to the danger of this everlasting fire, by mortal sin; nor to endure any such guilt, though it were even for one moment, lest in that very moment God should break the thread of thy life, and let thee drop into that fire, that shall never be quenched. O what a mercy it is of thy God that it has not been thy case long ago!

AUGUST 1. *On the pain of loss in hell.*

CONSIDER first, that though the fire of hell, with all the rest of the *exteriour* torments which the damned must for ever endure, in that woful place, be terrible beyond all that can be expressed or conceived; yet is it no ways comparable, in the judgment of divines, to the *interior* pangs and agonies of the soul, caused by the *pæna damni*, or the eternal *loss* of God, and of all that is good; and the perpetual sense, they will ever have of the greatness of this their loss, and of all its dreadful consequences. Alas! they have lost their God for ever. They are divorced eternally from him; they are stript of all his gifts; and all his graces; no light is left them in their souls; no glimpse of hope; no sense of good, no power of love, either for God or their neighbours: Ah! unhappy wretches, who cannot love! They are excommunicated from God: they are sent into an eternal banishment, far from him, far from his glorious kingdom, and the happy society of his children; far from their true country, and all its blissful joys, which were once purchased for them, by the blood of the Son of God. They are eternally separated from the ocean of all good.

Consider 2dly, how much the damned will regret this loss which is the most dreadful of all evils, this eternal separation from God. Alas! poor sinners, here, while they lie groveling in the mire of the earth, diverted from the thought of God, by a thousand imper tinencies; and yet continually partaking, many ways, of his sweetness and goodness, in some or other of his creatures, have little or no idea of what it is absolutely to lose God for evermore. But the damned, by their own woful experience, will be fully convinced, now it is too late, that none of all the rest of the torments of hell can be compared to this loss. God is *an infinite good in himself*; and he is the inexhausted *source* of all our good; and of every thing that is any ways good in his creatures: he is *our universal good*. In losing him then the damned have lost an *infinite good*; their first beginning, and their last end, by whom, and for whom, they

they were created: they have lost *their sovereign good, their universal good, their immense eternal good*; the overflowing fountain, the very ocean of all good; their true and only happiness. They have lost him totally; they have lost him irrecoverably; they have lost him eternally: they have lost him in himself; they have lost him in themselves: they have lost him in all his creatures. There is an immense gulf between them and him, never never to be passed.

Consider 3dly, still further, how dreadfully the damned will be tormented with the perpetual thinking on this most rueful of all losses. Ah! their lively sense of this most dismal and irreparable loss, and of all the sad consequences of it, will continually rack their despairing souls; they will not be able so much as to turn away their thought one moment from it. For which ever way they shall turn, to seek any one drop of ease, or comfort, in him, or from him; they will meet with none: all things will seem to conspire against them; all things will tell them they have lost their God. They will always find themselves bound down fast in eternal chains, which will keep them in a state of violence, far away from him: and all the efforts of their vehement longings after him, will only serve to redouble their misery. Hence there flow a thousand other evils, that make their whole soul a hell to itself. Hence black despair, sadness, rage, hatred, and blasphemy.

Conclude never to turn away from God in this life, nor to lose him by wilful sin; and then thou wilt effectually prevent this last and worst of all evils, of being eternally separated from him.

AUGUST 2. *On the worm of hell.*

CONSIDER first, that as we are assured by the word of God, that the *fire* of hell *shall never be quenched*; so are we also assured by the same unerring word, that *the worm* of the damned *shall never die*. St. Mark ix. This never dying worm of a wicked conscience, like a black poisonous serpent, will for

ever fasten itself upon their breasts; it will continually gnaw them; it will eat its way into their hearts; and perpetually prey upon their very souls. O who can conceive the greatness of this torment! This eternal remorse; this most bitter, but fruitless repentance; this dismal melancholy; this extremity of anguish; accompanied with everlasting horror, confusion and despair! O how hateful, how abominable will all their former crimes now appear in the eyes of the damned! O how will they now be convinced, when it is too late, of the enormity of them! O how will they now detest them.

Consider 2dly, that what eternally feeds their never dying worm, is the enormous guilt of mortal sin: with which the souls of the damned are eternally stained, infected and corrupted. This dreadful guilt is ever written on their foreheads; it penetrates them on all sides; it renders them more ugly and filthy than the very dungeons of hell; eternally odious in the eyes of their creator; and most intolerable and insupportable to their own selves; the very devils are not more hateful to them, than their own souls are, as long as they see them thus strangely tainted and corrupted, and eternally possessed by this hellish monster; or rather by as many hellish monsters as they have committed mortal sins. Ah! Christians, see by this, what the guilt of mortal sin is! See what the dreadful consequences of it are for eternity! And learn from hence to detest it above all evils. O be assured that hell itself can produce nothing worse!

Consider 3dly, what a racking torture it will be to the damned to all eternity, to be revolving, without ceasing, in their memory, their past folly, stupidity, and madness, in forfeiting the eternal joys of heaven, which they might have obtained at so easy a rate; and selling both their God and their souls, for an empty toy, for a filthy satisfaction, that lasted but one moment, and left nothing behind it but guilt and remorse; or for some punctilio of honour, or petty interest, by which they were then robbed of all their true treasures, and
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all their true honour; and for which they are now reduced to the extremity of all kinds of misery. Oh! what will their judgment be of this cheating world, and of all its short-lived fooleries and vanities, when after having been millions of years in hell, looking back, and scarce being able to find, in that immense duration, the small point of their mortal life, they shall with most bitter regret be continually comparing together time and eternity, past enjoyments and present punishments, virtue and vice, heaven and hell.

Conclude to keep off from the guilt of wilful sin, and the worm of hell shall never come near thee: it can prey upon nothing but mortal sin.

AUG. 3. *On a miserable eternity.*

CONSIDER first, that what above all other things makes hell intolerable, is the eternity of its torments. It is this eternity that is an infinite aggravation to all and every one of them. It is this bitter ingredient, which makes every drop of that cup of the divine vengeance, of which all the damned are forced to drink, so insupportable. Were there so much as the least glimpse of hope, that the miseries of the damned would one day have an end; though it were after millions of ages; hell would be no longer hell; because it would admit of some comfort. But for all these inexpressible torments to continue for ever, as long as God shall be God; without the least hopes of ever seeing an end of them; O this it is, that is the greatest rack of the damned! O eternity, eternity! how little do worldlings apprehend thee now! How unwilling are they to believe thee (notwithstanding the express declaration of God's unerring word) for fear thou shouldst put a restraint upon their vicious inclinations! O how terrible wilt thou be to them hereafter, when they shall find themselves ingulfed in thy bottomless abyss!

Consider 2dly, if one short night seems so long and tedious to a poor sick man in a burning fever; if he counts every hour, and with so much impatience, longs

for the morning, which yet will bring him but little relief, or comfort; what must this dreadful night of eternity be, in the midst of all the pains of hell? No man in his senses would purchase a kingdom, at the rate of lying for ten years confined to a soft bed, without once coming off. Ah! what a misery then must it be to be chained down to a bed of fire, and of such a fire as that of hell is, with all the rest of its torments; not for ten years only, nor for ten thousand times ten years; but for as many hundred thousand millions of ages, as there are drops of water in the ocean, or atoms in the air, in a word, for a never-ending eternity?

Consider gdly, in order to frame a better idea of this miserable eternity, what an immense space of time would be required, for any one of the damned, if he were to shed but one tear in a thousand years, to shed tears enough to fill the sea. The world has not yet lasted six thousand years: so that the first of all the damned would not have shed six tears. And yet, O dreadful eternity! the time will most certainly come, when any one of those wretches shall be able with truth to say, that at the rate of one tear for a thousand years, he might have shed tears enough, not only to make a sea; but to drown the whole world, and to fill up the vast space between heaven and earth. And yet alas! after these millions of millions of ages, he will be as far off from the end of his misery, as he was the first day he came into that place of wo. Compute after this, if thou pleasest, as many hundred thousand millions of years as thy thoughts can reach to; suppose if thou wilt the whole surface of the earth to be covered with numeral figures: cast up, if thou canst, this prodigious sum of years; and then multiply it by itself; and multiply again a second time the product by itself; and then at the foot of this immense sum, write down, *here begins eternity*. O terrible eternity! Is it possible that they who believe thee, should not fear thee! Is it possible that they who fear thee, should dare to sin?

Conclude ever to fly with all thy power, for the time to come, all such sins as lead to this miserable eternity.

And

And as to thy past guilt, to take the best care thou art able to wash away now all the stains of thy soul, in the blood of the lamb, by the means of a hearty repentance, and sincere confession. Penitential tears are capable of effacing those stains at present, which everlasting flames shall never be able to burn away hereafter.

AUG. 4. *On the happiness of heaven.*

CONSIDER first, and ponder well these words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 9. *That Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love him.* O! what then must this happiness of heaven, what must this eternal glory be, which so far exceeds all our thoughts and conceptions? God is infinite in all his attributes, in his majesty, power, wisdom, justice, &c. but his goodness, and mercy, his liberality, bounty, and magnificence, in his gifts and rewards, overflow as it were the banks, and shew themselves in a most extraordinary manner, above all his works, *Pf. cxliv.* If then his justice be so terrible, as we have seen, with regard to his enemies; how much more will his mercy, his goodness and his bounty, declare themselves in favour of his friends? O what then must this blessed kingdom of heaven be, which in his infinite goodness he has prepared for his beloved children? Which he has contrived by his infinite wisdom, and effected by his infinite power; for the manifestation of his glory, and for the entertaining them all with an eternal banquet, worthy of himself?

Consider 2dly, that if by the cost and price of a thing, we may guess at its worth, we cannot make too advantageous a judgment of the happiness of heaven, the purchasing of which has cost the precious blood and life of the Son of God himself, which is indeed an infinite price: and which, notwithstanding his purchase, is not to be obtained by us, without much pains and labour, without many crosses and sufferings, and without giving up our whole selves in exchange for it: and after all, though we were to labour ever so hard,

all our life-time, for the acquiring it, and should give ourselves and all things else for it; yet our labours and all whatsoever we can give, bear so little proportion with the greatness of this happiness, that we are said even so to receive *this water of life freecost*. Apoc. xxii. 17. Nay though we should even suffer a thousand deaths for the sake of this eternal life, we are still assured Rom. viii. 18. *That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with this heavenly glory that is to come*. So much does the bliss of heaven exceed all that we can say, think, or conceive.

Consider 3dly, the definition divines give of beatitude, or eternal happiness, when they term it *a state made perfect, by assembling together, and comprizing in itself all good things*: [*Status omnium bonorum aggregatione perfectus*] that is to say, a permanent and everlasting state, replenished with all that is good, without the least mixture of evil; a general and universal good, comprizing at once, and for ever, all manner of good things, filling brimful the vast capacity of the affections and desires of the soul, and eternally securing her from all fear, or danger, of want or change. O my soul, see then thou turn all thy pursuits after this true and eternal felicity: all things else are but mere toys in comparison with thy sovereign and universal good.

Conclude with most humble and hearty thanks to the infinite goodness of God, who before thou wast born hath prepared such an eternal happiness for thee, and provided all necessary means for thee to obtain it. But resolve at the same time, to be diligent in the use of all these means of thy salvation. For *he that made thee without thy concurrence, will not save thee without thy concurrence*. St. Augustine.

AUG. 5. *On the good things of our Lord, in the land of the living.*

CONSIDER first, that the things, which are most apt to allure the children of this world, and to draw their affection after them, are honours, riches and pleasures: but their error is, that they seek these thing

things, where they are not to be found; and suffer themselves to be imposed upon by false appearances. True honours, true riches and true pleasures, are not to be found in the broad way of the world, nor in the ways of sin; but are to be met with, together with all other good things, *in the land of the living*. Here all the inhabitants are advanced to the highest dignity, even to a fellowship with the living God, and a partnership with Jesus Christ in his throne. Here all are most noble, and most renowned; most wise, and most holy. Here all are of blood-royal, children and heirs of the king of kings. All are kings and queens, crowned for ever with wreaths of immortal glory; and shining far more brightly than the sun. These are honours indeed; and truly worthy of the Christian's ambition. And all these, O my soul, if thou pleasest, may be thine for ever.

Consider 2dly, the riches that flow in this happy *land of promise*. Where the inhabitants want nothing, covet nothing, and enjoy all things. This beatitude of the Saints is called in scripture a *kingdom*: and such a *kingdom* indeed it is to all those happy souls, as in plenty of all things, wealth, power, greatness, and endless duration, infinitely exceeds all the kingdoms of the world. It is likened to a *treasure* of immense value, which all the riches of the world are not worthy to purchase. For the riches of this kingdom are of a far superior kind to all earthly treasures: gold and precious stones are valued no more than dirt here; where the inhabitants have the stars under their feet. The great treasure of the Blessed is the eternal possession of God himself, with all his riches. And O my soul, what more can be desired!

Consider 3dly, that this heavenly land *flows also for ever with the milk and honey* of pure and immortal delights, pleasures and joys. For here all are eternally *inebriated*, according to the Psalmist, *with the plenty of God's house, and are made to drink of the torrent of his pleasure: For here with him is the fountain of life, &c.* Pj. xxxv, Yea the great river of the water of life, clear
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as *chryſtal*, which proceeds from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, to water all the ſtreets of the heavenly Jeruſalem, having the tree of life growing upon its banks, with all the variety of its excellent fruits, (*Apoc.* xxii.) And this ſame is that torrent of pleaſure, which eternally flows, (bringing with it all theſe delicious fruits) into the ſouls of God's ſervants; quite replenishing them, and filling brimfull all their powers, ſenſes and faculties, with inconceivable delight, O who would not gladly part with all the ſatisfactions this world can afford for ſuch immortal pleaſures as theſe.

Conclude to be no longer a ſlave to worldly toys, vain honours, falſe riches, and fading pleaſures. But to turn away, without loſs of time, from this Egypt, that can afford thee nothing but muddy water, incapable to quench thy thirſt; and to bend thy courſe towards thy true country, where thou ſhalt meet with all thou canſt deſire, and that for eternity.

AUG. 6. *On the tranſfiguration of our Lord, St. Matthew xvii.*

CONSIDER firſt, how our Lord taking with him Peter, James and John, brought them up into a high mountain apart; and was tranſfigured before them: ſo that his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his garments became white as ſnow. And there appeared to them Moſes and Elias talking with him, (concerning his deſceſt that he ſhould accompliſh in Jeruſalem, *Luke* ix. 31.) Now Peter, being tranſported with the glory of this viſion, cried out, Lord it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias. And as he was yet ſpeaking, behold a bright cloud overſhadowed them: and lo a voice out of the cloud, ſaying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him, *Matt.* xvii. This tranſfiguration of our Lord, full of leſſons and inſtructions for us, is honoured by the church in the feſtival of this day; with a particular view to the raiſing up the thoughts, and hopes, of her children, in the miſt of the hardſhips and labours of their mortal pilgrimage, to the eternal

eternal repose, and glory of their heavenly country; that blessed Jerusalem, which the true Israelites must never forget; though constrained as yet, by a miserable captivity, to sit down and weep upon the banks of the rivers of Babylon, and lament their distance from the house of God in Sion.

Consider 2dly, in this mystery of the transfiguration of our Lord, how wonderfully he was here pleased to confirm our faith: as well by the joint testimonies of the law, and the prophets, bearing witness to the gospel; represented by the glorious apparition of Moses and Elias with Christ: as by the testimony of God himself, in all the three persons; by the voice of the Father, by the glory of the Son, and by the manifestation of the Holy Ghost in the bright cloud. See how he was pleased, by the same glory of his transfiguration, to encourage all his followers, to bear with patience, the afflictions, labours, crosses, and persecutions of this life, in hopes of a share in that eternal glory, of which he has given us as it were a sketch in this mystery: ever remembering that of the apostle, *2 Cor. iv. 17. that our present tribulation which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.* But O let us take along with us that other lesson also, which we are taught by the voice of the heavenly Father, in the transfiguration of our Lord, that the true way to a happy eternity, and to all good, is ever to hear and to obey the Son of God.

Consider 3dly, how St. Peter, being out of himself, with the joy of this vision, was desirous to be always in the same happy situation, and always enjoying the like glory: and therefore he cried out, *Lord, it is good for us to be here; not knowing, saith St. Luke, what he said, C. ix. 33.* Because, though it was inconceivably delightful to see and enjoy (though for a short time) the least glimpse of heavenly light and glory: yet, as this present life was not to be the time of enjoyment, but of labours, and of sufferings; and the Son of God himself was to enter into his glory, by labours and sufferings, *Luke xxiv. 26*; it was inordinate to desire here for a continuance, that which was reserved for hereafter; and
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for such only as should be entitled to it, by labours and sufferings. Learn from hence, O my soul, with regard to divine consolations, and such like favours, that though thou art to receive them, when given, with humility, gratitude and love; admiring the goodness and bounty of God, who is pleased thus to look down upon thee, the most unworthy of sinners: yet thou art not to set thy heart upon them; nor to be disturbed and discouraged, when they are taken away: for merit and perfection consists not in them; but in working, suffering and loving: and for the time of this mortal life, ordinarily speaking, it is far better for thee, to be with thy Lord, upon mount Calvary, than upon mount Thabor.

Conclude instead of being eager after these transitory consolations, which at the best are but as small drops of water, that fall from the clouds of heaven to refresh us for a moment in this dry desert, through which we are now travelling; to aspire rather continually after that great overflowing river above, which gives joy without end to the city of God; and which alone is capable, of fully quenching thy thirst, and satisfying thy soul.

AUG. 7. *On the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem.*

CONSIDER first, how glorious and beautiful those mansions are that are prepared for the eternal abode of the servants of God in the heavenly Jerusalem. *How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts,* cries out the royal prophet, *Pf. lxxxiii. my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.* The beauty and glory of this city of God, every way correspond with the riches, bounty and magnificence of this almighty monarch, who has built it for the manifestation of his power, wisdom and goodness: and to be the eternal habitation of his dearest friends, and children. And what great things will he not do, when both his own glory, and his love for us, call upon him to exert himself? See my soul, how noble a palace he has given us here below, even in this place of our banishment; beautified with this sun, moon, and stars; accomplished, and furnished

nished with this almost infinite variety of minerals, plants, flowers, trees, and living creatures, in the earth, air, and waters, all subservient to man, and all wonderfully beautiful in their kinds, &c. If then he has so richly provided for us in this vale of tears, in this *region of the shade of death*; what must our eternal habitation be in the *land of the living*? If here he is so bountiful even to his enemies, in affording them so commodious and so noble a dwelling, what may not his friends and children expect, in his eternal kingdom; where alone, according to the prophet, *our Lord is magnificent*, *Isai. xxxiii. 21.*

Consider 2dly, how the scripture, to accommodate itself to our low way of thinking, describes the glory and beauty of this heavenly city, by representing it to us under the figures of such things as we most admire here below: when it tells us, that the walls of this city of God are built with precious stones, and that its streets are watered with the bright chrystal streams, of the river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God; and that on the banks of this river, on both sides, grows the tree of life: that there shall be no night, nor any want of sun or moon; but that God himself will be its everlasting light: and that every one of the just shall shine like the sun, &c. O how glorious are these things that are said of thee, O city of God! *Pf. lxxxvi.* But O how much more glorious are those great things that are veiled under these figures!

Consider 3dly, that *Jerusalem* is interpreted, *the sight or vision of peace*: and therefore this name is given to the city above, because there alone is the true seat of eternal peace. There is *the tabernacle of God with men, and he shall dwell with them—and he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away*, *Apocal. xxi. 3. 4.* No heats, no colds, no rain, no storms, no diseases, no pains, no conflicts, or adversities of any kind, have any access to this city, or can ever come near this blessed abode. But a most bright day, a most serene calm, an ever-

everlasting peace perpetually reigns here: *a solid peace, a peace never to be disturbed, but always secure, a peace both within and without, a peace every way firm.* Kempis.

Conclude ever to aspire after this blessed Jerusalem; and to despise all earthly toys in comparison with this heavenly city. O how good is our God, who has prepared such lovely and everlasting mansions for us! O blessed for ever by all his creatures, be his infinite goodness!

AUG. 8. *On the happy society of the heavenly Jerusalem.*

CONSIDER first, the multitude, beauty, and glory of the inhabitants of this blessed Jerusalem: those millions of millions of bright heavenly spirits, that always surround the throne of God, as we learn from the vision of the prophet, *Daniel vii. Thousands of thousands minister to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stand before him:* that immense number of Cherubims and Seraphims, all on fire with divine love: that infinite multitude of Saints, and Martyrs, and other servants of God, of both sexes, gathered out of all nations, tribes and tongues; and above them all the blessed Virgin mother of God, the queen of Saints and Angels. The number of these heavenly citizens is innumerable. They are all ever beautiful, and ever young: they are all most bright, and most glorious. They wear the name of God on their foreheads, expressed by the unalterable serenity, joy, peace, and light, that shines from their countenance. The very sight of any one of them, as we learn from the experience of some of the Saints and servants of God, is enough to ravish the soul into an extacy, and to fill it with inexpressible delight: and what will it be to see them all, and to enjoy their happy society for all eternity!

Consider 2dly, that one of the most happy things, that a good Christian could meet with, or desire on this side of eternity, would be to live quite separated from the company

company and conversation of the wicked, and of all the fools, and the slaves of this world; and to converse only with the wise, and with the holy, and be joined with them, in a perfect band of fraternal charity, friendship, and union. *O how good, and how pleasant it is,* says the Psalmist, *for brethren to dwell together in unity,* Pl. cxxxii. But O what company, what conversation, what friendship here upon earth, how pure soever, can bear any comparison with that of the blessed in heaven! For there we shall meet with millions of millions of brethren and friends, all most loving, all most wise, all most holy; in a word all full of God. Their communications one with another are most pure; their conversation most sublime and heavenly: the praises of God, and his eternal truths are their perpetual theme: harmonious hymns of divine love, are their constant entertainment.

Consider *gdy*, more in particular, the inexpressible charity and love, which the blessed have one for another: which is so great, that they all have but one heart and one soul. This makes them take such an inconceivable delight in each others happiness, through the love they bear each other; as to look upon the happiness of their brethren, as their own; and to rejoice in it, as if it were their own. So that by means of this their heavenly charity, the joy and satisfaction of every individual is multiplied to as many fold as there are Angels and blessed souls, in heaven. O how lovely is this heavenly friendship! O let us aspire after this happy society! let us aim, as much as human weakness will permit, at an imitation of this blessed charity, by rejoicing at every real good we discover in our neighbours, as if it were our own; and by inviting all we can to join with us here in the love and praises of God, and in the practice of all other virtues, that so both we and they may hereafter be happily united together, associated for eternity, in singing to our Lord, the immortal songs of Sion.

Conclude, if thou desirest to be eternally happy in the society of the Saints in the heavenly Sion, to flee

now from the midst of the Babylon of a wicked world; and to associate thyself, as much as thou canst, with the true servants of God. There is nothing will be of more service to thy soul, during thy mortal pilgrimage.

AUG. 9. *On the eternal enjoyment of God.*

CONSIDER first, that although the kingdom of heaven abounds with all that can be imagined good and delightful; yet there is but one sovereign good, in the enjoyment of which, consists the essential beatitude of heaven, and that is God himself; whom the blessed ever see, as he truly is, face to face; and see him in the very centre of their own souls; and by the eternal contemplation of his infinite beauty and truth, together with all his divine attributes, and attractions, they are quite ravished, and set on fire with seraphick flames of eternal love: by means of this contemplation and love, they are closely united by a most pure and amiable union, with this sovereign and infinite good; and they eternally enjoy him: he surrounds and penetrates them on all sides with inexpressible delights; he fills their whole souls with himself, the overflowing source of all good; he gives himself to them to be their joy, their treasure, their never ending bliss; he transforms them in a manner into himself: as when brass or iron in the furnace is perfectly penetrated by the fire, it loseth in a manner its own nature, and becomes all flame and fire. O happy creatures! what can be wanting to compleat your joys; who have within, and without you, the immense ocean of endless felicity?

Consider 2dly, that what makes God himself infinitely and eternally happy, is the eternal knowledge, love, and enjoyment of himself. For God himself is his own happiness: nothing less than his own immense divinity could ever make him happy. See then, my soul, the infinite riches of the bounty and goodness of thy God, who giveth his servants, in reward of their loyalty, so great a good, that nothing greater can be given: even God himself can give nothing greater; since he giveth himself to them, to be their possession,
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and eternal inheritance; and what can be given greater than himself. O shall not that suffice my soul, to make thee happy, which makes God himself happy! Who then can be able to conceive the least part of the joy, peace and pleasure, which that soul must experience, that sees herself thus full of God, and enjoying him! O how happily does she here lose herself, drowned in an ocean of delights! An immense ocean, where she can neither find surface, nor bottom, nor any shore, because it is on every side incomprehensible and infinite.

Consider 3dly, in what manner all the powers of these blessed souls, which are thus full of God, are eternally employed. Their *understanding*, elevated by the light of glory, and *in this light of God, seeing God the light*, ever contemplates, with infinite delight, this sovereign and universal truth; and in him sees all truths; penetrates into the secrets of God, and the sublimest mysteries; and is even let in to the closet of his heart, to see there the immense treasures of his love for us, and all the wonders he works in time and eternity, in consequence of this love. Their *memory* is continually occupied with the remembrance of all that God has ever done for them, his creating them, out of his own pure goodness, for the eternal enjoyment of himself; his redeeming them with the blood of his divine Son; and through him, opening to them an inexhaustible source of mercy, grace, and all good; his manifold preservations, by which he has so often delivered them both from a temporal, and an eternal death: and his innumerable other benefits, and distinguishing favours. Their *will* all set on fire with the sight of the infinite beauty, and infinite goodness of their God, loves him without ceasing, and without measure; and perfectly consumes herself in the flames of an eternal love: she lays fast hold on this her sovereign good, she embraces him, she eternally adheres to him, and by a thrice happy union, she becomes in a manner the same thing with her divine lover.

Conclude to employ here all the powers of thy soul upon God, by the practice of mental prayer and recollection: and to accustom them now to that kind of exercise, which thou hopest shall be their eternal occupation. Thus mayest thou in some measure anticipate here upon earth the joys of heaven, by contemplation and love.

AUG. 10. *On St. Laurence.*

CONSIDER first, how St. Laurence being arch-deacon to the holy pope Xystus, in the time of the persecution of the church, under the heathen emperor Valerian, seeing his holy Bishop led away to martyrdom, and himself left behind; addressed himself to him in these words: *Whither art thou going, O father, without thy son? Whither art thou hastening, O holy priest, without thy deacon? Thou wast never accustomed to offer sacrifice without me thy minister: try me then now, and make the experiment, whether thou hast chosen a fit minister, to whom thou hast committed the dispensing the blood of our Lord.* To whom the holy pope replied: *I am not going to leave thee, my son, nor to forsake thee: but only am going a little before thee: after three days thou shalt follow me; I am old, and therefore my conflict is more light and easy; but thou art young, and shalt sustain far greater conflicts for the love of Christ, and shalt triumph in a more glorious manner over the tyrant.* See, my soul, what a spirit animated these blessed martyrs, what an ardour they had to suffer for the love of Christ: and let it be thy grief to find so very little in thyself of these holy dispositions.

Consider 2dly, that what made St. Laurence so great a Saint, was his divine charity: that is to say, his ardent love for his God, and for his neighbour. His charity for his neighbour was evidenced as well by his diligent discharge of his office in the care and support of all the poor of the city; as by his distributing amongst

amongst them, in the time of the persecution, all the plate and treasures of the church, committed to his charge. His fervent love of God was evidenced, by that invincible courage and fortitude, with which he endured the worst of torments, even with chearfulness and joy, because he was suffering for the sake of his beloved. His love was truly stronger than death: and the fire, with which he was outwardly broiled on the gridiron, was no ways to be compared with the flames of divine love, which were enkindled within his soul: and which made him proof against all the efforts of his enemies, and victorious over all the powers of earth and hell. O! it is divine charity that makes Saints. It is love: it is an ardent love of God, and our neighbours that carries souls to heaven. O let us but love, as we ought, and as we are all strictly bound to love, and we shall all be Saints: and he that loves the most, will be the greatest Saint. O teach us, dear Lord, but this divine art of love: and in all things else, do with us as thou wilt.

Consider 3dly, the great lessons given us in the gospel of this festival, *St. John xii. 24. &c.* in which we are taught by our Lord that the grain of corn must die, before it can bring forth fruit: That he that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal: That the minister, or servant of Christ must follow him, and that where he is, there also his minister shall be: And that if any one shall duly minister to Christ, he shall be honoured by his Father. See, my soul, thou study well these gospel lessons: See that thou learn to die to thy self-love, to thy own will, to thy disorderly passions, and sensual inclinations, by the practice of daily self-denial and mortification; and then thou shalt bring forth much fruit. We must all be so far at least martyrs of Christ, as to die to ourselves for the love of him. Thus we shall be his servants, and ministers indeed: thus we shall follow him; and where he is, we shall also be: Thus we shall come to be eternally honoured by his heavenly Father.

Conclude to honour this glorious martyr St. Lawrence, by an imitation of his fervour, zeal, and constancy in the cause of God; and of his ardent love for God and his neighbour. And learn from the consideration of the grievous torments the martyrs have endured for Christ, to suffer, with patience at least, whatever share shall be allotted to thee in the cross of Christ.

AUG. 11. *On the endowments of the glorified bodies in heaven.*

CONSIDER first, that as the body and soul are individual companions and partners in this life, in the good or evil we do; so shall they be in the rewards or punishments of the next. Hence besides the essential beatitude of the soul, consisting in the eternal sight and enjoyment of God; and the happy exercise of all the powers of the soul, employed eternally about him: the body also of the servants of God shall meet with its eternal reward, in heaven; and with such, and so happy a reward as no human understanding can be able to conceive. These bodies of ours at the resurrection, will be most wonderfully changed. *This corruptible, says the apostle, 1 Cor. xy. must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. And again, it is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory: it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power: it is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body. Spiritual, not in its substance, (for it is still a body, and not a spirit,) but in its qualities; like the body of Christ, after his resurrection, penetrating through the doors that were shut, and all other obstacles; clothed with perpetual health, strength, vigour, and youth; swift as thought; immortal and impassible.*

Consider 2dly, the glory and beauty of these heavenly bodies, far exceeding all earthly glory and beauty. *The just, saith our Lord, shall shine like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Matt. xiii. 43. Yea the very least of God's servants, in that eternal kingdom shall*

shall be far more, resplendent and beautiful than any thing that can be seen by mortal eye here below, or represented by man's imagination. But O how happy then shall the eyes of the blessed be, that shall be eternally entertained with the sight of all these heavenly beauties; every one of which is so charming and ravishing to behold! O how happy shall those eyes be, which shall be perpetually fed with the view, at once, of all that is delightful in the new heavens and the new earth! And what again is all this in comparison with the happiness of their eternal contemplation of the great King of beauty himself, and King of glory Jesus Christ; whom they shall always see, in all his beauty, and in all his glory!

Consider 3dly, that the other bodily senses shall also have their reward in heaven: not by their enjoying there any of those gross or brutal pleasures, which carnal and worldly minded men are so fond of; which are so apt to defile the soul; and can give her no true satisfaction: but by the eternal experience of pleasures of quite another nature, pure and immortal, which will affect all the senses, and fill them with unspeakable delight, from the most delicious sweets of the heavenly paradise. And as for the *hearing* in particular, it will be for ever entertained, with an unspeakable harmony, formed by the melodious concerts of all the celestial choirs, and the united voice of millions of millions of heavenly citizens, all sweetly singing together divine hymns of eternal praise and love, to their ever glorious and ever loving King. O my soul, the hearing of any one of these heavenly voices, could it be allowed us here, would certainly be enough to ravish any mortal with inexpressible delight! And what must it be, eternally to hear them all?

Conclude to admire and adore the infinite bounty and goodness of thy God, who not content with giving the soul so great a reward as the eternal enjoyment of the sovereign good, which is himself, has been pleased to prepare such excellent gifts and endowments for the body, to make it also eternally happy. But then

then thou must remember that if thou wouldst secure to thy body these heavenly endowments, and all this happiness for endless ages, thou must keep it pure and holy, during this mortal life, and ever mortify its disorderly appetites, and carnal inclinations.

AUG. 12. *On a happy eternity.*

CONSIDER first, that what compleats the happiness of the servants of God in his heavenly kingdom, is the eternity, and the absolute security of all their enjoyments, in every branch of their bliss. Their joys are even linkt with God's eternity: and by the unalterable decrees of his divine love, they can no more cease to be happy, than he can cease to be God. The honours, riches, and pleasures of this world are all alas short and momentary: could they even continue with us, for the whole time of our life, (which is seldom or never the case) they could be of no better condition than this our mortal life; which is but a vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and presently vanishes, and is seen no more, St. James iv. 15. And though we would give the whole world to secure to ourselves but one day of the enjoyment of them, we should not be able to purchase any such security. How long then, O ye children of men, will you be in love with these empty vanities? How long will you suffer yourselves to be imposed upon with lies, and deceits? Give but your hearts in earnest to God: Give yourselves up to divine love; and instead of these vain worldly toys, which at the best you can enjoy only for an uncertain moment, you will secure to yourselves *all good* from your God, for endless ages.

Consider 2dly, Christian soul, and look forward into this immense eternity, of incomprehensible and never ending felicity, which is prepared for thee in heaven, to reward thy fidelity in the love and service of thy God, and to recompense the short labours and sufferings of thy mortal life. O what a pleasure it is, to lose one's self in the happy prospect of this boundless

less ocean of eternity! O what an unspeakable joy to think of being *for ever* plunged into the immense abyss of the Divinity itself! What a delight to be counting up millions, of millions, of millions of ages; crowned with all the honours, riches, and enjoyments of the heavenly paradise; and after all to find one's self no nearer the end of this felicity, than when one first set out. The thought of this blessed eternity, inspired St. Teresa, when yet an infant, with a contempt of all those things that pass away with time; and with a desire of giving up her life for the love of Christ: she often repeated with great feeling those words. *For ever, For ever, For ever*, and in the meditation on these eternal years, a bright fire of devotion was enkindled in her soul. O let the like thought inspire us with the like affections.

Consider 3dly, that in this eternal bliss there is not only an absolute security of their joys never having an end; but also an assurance that they shall never suffer the least decay, or diminution; or any ways become tedious, or less agreeable, by the infinite length of the possession of them. For as the God, whom the blessed perpetually enjoy, is every way infinite and incomprehensible; being an immense ocean of all good, and an inexhaustible treasure of all happiness: so the joy, pleasure, and delight of those that eternally enjoy him, is ever fresh, and ever new; and continually fills the whole capacity, and fully satisfies the whole appetite of their souls. O! how blessed then must they be, that dwell in thy house, O Lord! *For ever, and ever they shall praise thee.* Pl. lxxxiii. O! how lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Yea, my soul thirsteth after this fountain of eternal life, which is with her God, and which perpetually inebriates all his heavenly guests, flowing without ceasing into their happy breasts.

Conclude to despise henceforward all that is earthly and transitory; and from this hour to set out, and to begin thy journey towards this glorious, heavenly and eternal kingdom. There thou wilt find all that thy heart

heart can desire; immortal honours, never failing riches; pure and everlasting pleasures. There thou wilt meet with beauties that never fade, perpetual health, perpetual life, &c. O this alone is thy true home, the land of the living!

AUG. 13. *On conformity with the will of God.*

CONSIDER first, that a conformity of our will, in all things, with the holy will of God, is the sovereign perfection of a Christian life: inasmuch as it is the very perfection of divine love, and charity, which is the queen of virtues. For there can be no greater love, than to have no other will than the will of our divine lover; so as ever to adore in all things his holy will, ever to embrace and love his holy will. This kind of love is perfect indeed: it resembles the love of the Angels and Saints of heaven. The most acceptable offering we can make to God, out of our poor stock, is that of our will: whatsoever else we give him, so long as we keep any part of our will from him, will never content him: he claims our *whole* will, without reserve, when he says, *my son give me thy heart*, Prov. xxiii. Now this we give him, when we conform our will in all things with his blessed will. But if we refuse to submit our will, in any thing, to his holy will, we refuse him our heart; or at the best we only offer him a divided heart, which he will never accept. O my God, let my *whole heart* be ever thine! Let my whole soul be ever subject to thee. Let my will be ever a faithful servant, and a true lover of thy ever blessed and holy will.

Consider 2dly, the great advantages that come to our souls from a perfect conformity with the will of God. It gives a certain dignity and perfection to all, even the meanest, of our actions, and to all our sufferings, by making the will of God the rule of them all. It *purifies* our *intention* in all things; by continually directing the eye of the soul towards God. It brings with

with it a certain uprightness, and simplicity of heart, which is highly agreeable to God: it makes us even, as the Scripture says of David, men *according to God's own heart*. It places the soul in the hands of God, for him to dispose of her in all things, according to his holy will and pleasure. It brings along with it a perfect peace, and tranquility of mind, in all events, as being all ordered and directed by him, who is infinitely good, and infinitely wise; and who orders all things for the good of them who cast their whole care upon him, and seek to have no other will but his. O blessed conformity, how rich, how sweet, and delicious to the soul are thy happy fruits! Thou makest us enjoy even a heaven upon earth.

Consider 3dly, that this conformity of the soul with the will of God, rids her of all her evils, and puts her in possession of all other virtues. It is the sovereign means to bring all our passions into *order* and subjection, and to mortify all our *irregular* inclinations: For that which makes them *disorderly* and *irregular*, is their opposition to, or their resistance of the will of God: whereas this blessed conformity obliges them all to stoop down, and submit to his sacred will. It *humbles* the soul under the mighty hand of God: it teaches her to be *meek* under all injuries, affronts, and provocations, considering them all as coming from the just appointments of heaven: it makes her willing to take up her cross, and to bear it till death, with perfect *patience* and resignation: in a word, it teaches her to be *obedient unto death*. O grant us, dear Lord, this blessed conformity.

Conclude to set a great esteem upon this excellent virtue of conformity with the will of God: It is the greatest treasure thou canst enjoy in this mortal pilgrimage. But then it is not to be obtained, without thy being in earnest in seeking it, fervent in praying for it; and ready to part with thy own will and humour for the purchasing it.

AUG. 14. *On the motives that oblige us to a perpetual conformity with the will of God.*

CONSIDER first, that all kind of motives concur in recommending to a Christian, this best of all devotions, which has for its object the holy will of God. It is our greatest *honour* and *glory* ever to follow God, to submit to him, to be servants of his divine will, to be servants of his divine love; to be so closely united to him, as to have no other will but his. It is our greatest *interest* to conform ourselves in all things with his blessed will; it brings with it all kind of good to our souls, both for time and eternity: for by giving up our will without reserve to God, we engage him to give himself without reserve to us. It is the source of the greatest, and indeed the only true and solid *pleasures*, to embrace the will of God in all things; for as much as it unites the soul with the fountain of all sweetness, which is God. The will of God is always right, always wise, always good, always beautiful, &c. The will of God is God himself. What motives then have we not to conform ourselves continually with this ever right, ever wise, ever good, ever beautiful will, of our ever loving God! How wicked is it to rebel against his sovereign will! How mad is it for us to pretend to withdraw ourselves from the will of the *Almighty*.

Consider 2dly, that the only business, for which we come into this world, is to do in all things the holy will of God. The Son of God himself had no other business during his mortal life than to do the will of his Father. *I came down from heaven*, says he, John vi. 38. *not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* And Pl. xxxix. *In the head of the book*, says he, *it is written of me, that I should do thy will: O my God, I have desired it—in the midst of my heart.* In this same great book of life, it is written also of all the children of God, that they likewise should do the will of their heavenly Father: this is the test by which we are all to be examined: all they that with Jesus Christ, *desire in the midst of their hearts*; and like him, embrace and love

love the holy will of God, and always conform themselves to it, shall be acknowledged for the true children of God, and the brethren of Jesus Christ: but as many as shall revolt, and fall off from their allegiance to the blessed will of God, shall have their names blotted out of the book of life. See then, my soul, that the true way to heaven is to conform thyself with the divine will.

Consider 3dly, that by all manner of titles, God claims of us a conformity with his heavenly will. He claims it as our creator; because he made us to serve him, and gave us our will, with the rest of the powers of the soul, only to be employed in the service of his holy will. With what face then can we refuse him the sacrifice of that will, which he made for himself? Or how can we pretend that his divine will should at any time stoop to our silly will; and not rather we give up at all times our whole will, by a perfect conformity to the will of our creator? The Son of God also claims our will, as our *Redeemer*, by the title of purchase: because he has ransomed our souls, enslaved before to Satan and sin; and bought them for himself, and his Father, at a great price, even with his own most precious blood. So that our will ought to be always at his disposal, as his property: and therefore ought ever to conform itself with his blessed will. The Holy Ghost also claims our will, by the title of *sanctification*: because our whole soul has been at our baptism dedicated, sanctified and consecrated by the Spirit of God, to be the eternal temple of God. And therefore our will, which is the principal power of the soul, and which commands the rest, is strictly bound, to be ever obedient to the will of him, who has chosen and sanctified it for himself.

Conclude, to give always to God what upon so many titles belongs wholly to him: and never more to be a rebel to the will of God; or to give the preference to thy own will, or any other creature, before the will of God.

AUG. 15. *On the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.*

CONSIDER first, in the festival of this day, and contemplate in spirit the glorious entry of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, into the everlasting kingdom of her Son. See, my soul, with what joy of the whole court of heaven: with what triumphs, with what heavenly hymns, she was escorted thither, by legions of Angels: see how all the citizens of heaven went forth to meet her: with what affectionate embraces she was welcomed by her divine Son; and presented by him to his eternal Father: see how she was placed above all the Angels and Saints; above all the Cherubims and Seraphims, on a most glorious throne; the highest in heaven next to that of her Son; and crowned by him with a diadem of such super-eminent brightness and glory as is not to be expressed nor conceived. Rejoice, O my soul, in this glorious assumption of the *mother of thy Lord*, who, as he has been pleased to make us his brethren, has been pleased to make her also *our mother*. O what a happiness it is for us, to have such a *mother* (who has so great interest with the King of heaven, and who takes our welfare so much to heart,) so near the throne of all mercy and grace! O blessed Virgin, graciously look down upon us, in this our banishment, and always shew thyself a mother to us.

Consider 2dly, what brought this ever blessed Virgin to this super-eminent glory: which we honour in this festival of her Assumption? 1. It was her most profound *humility*: she was exalted above all, because she was the most humble of all. For he that humbleth himself the most upon earth, shall be the most exalted in heaven. 2. It was her perfect *purity* of soul and body, mind and heart, from all the defilements of sin. 3. It was principally her super-eminent *love of God*: for the degree of the enjoyment of God, in his eternal

nal glory, is ever proportioned to the degree of our love of God, in this mortal life. If then we hope one day to follow this blessed Virgin to heaven, and to have a share in the glory of her Assumption; we must endeavour to imitate her humility, her purity, and her love of God. No soul can ever ascend to heaven, by any other way, than that of humility, purity, and the love of God.

Consider 3dly, that this imitation of the virtues of the blessed Virgin, is an excellent way of honouring her, and of shewing our real esteem, love and devotion to her. For how can we better testify our affection and veneration for the Saints of God, than by honouring and loving in them that which made them Saints; and that which God himself honours and loves in them; that is their virtues? or how can we better express our esteem and love for their virtues, than by studying to imitate them? This kind of devotion is most pleasing to the Saints; and to the queen of the Saints; and to the God of the Saints: it is most honourable to them, and most profitable to ourselves. This will bring us effectually to the eternal society of the Saints: which, without this, no other devotion can secure unto us.

Conclude so to rejoice in the exaltation of our blessed Lady, in this day of her glory, as to take up on this day a generous resolution of walking in her footsteps, by a diligent imitation of her life: but more especially by following the great examples of her humility, purity, and love of God. This generous resolution of thine will be so agreeable to her; as to add a new satisfaction and joy, to the immense felicity she possessed before.

AUG. 16. *On the Gospel, read on the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, Luke x. 30. &c.*

CONSIDER first, how our Lord going into a certain town, a certain woman named Martha received him into her house: and she had a sister called Mary, who sat also at the Lord's feet, and heard his word, &c. O how happy, my soul, were these holy sisters, who had it thus in their power to receive the Lord of glory into their house; to entertain him there, to hear his word, to converse familiarly with him, and to minister to him! O how happy should we have been, if we had lived at that time, and could have been favoured in the like manner! But stay, my soul, and see, if this same Lord does not offer thee the like favours at present; and if it be not entirely thy own fault, if thou art not a great Saint, in consequence of them. For does he not still abide amongst us in the blessed sacrament? Does he not there come in person into our house? Does he not bring all his treasures of divine grace with him, to enrich our souls? May we not, by a spiritual communion, invite him to us, whenever we please? May we not by a spirit of recollection, and mental prayer, entertain him, and converse with him, as long as we please? Does he not often visit us with his graces? Does he not often stand at the door of the heart and knock? Have we not his heavenly word with us? May we not minister to him when we please, and serve him in the persons of the poor; which service he declares he looks upon as done to himself? If so, what reason have we to regret our not having lived at the time of our Saviour, seeing he is always living with us.

Consider 2dly, how very differently, these two holy sisters were then employed; the one being *busy about much serving*, and full of care in providing for the entertainment of our Lord; the other sitting still at his feet, and quietly attending to his divine word. And yet they were both employed about him; they both dedicated themselves to his love and service. In this, they

they represent to us two different kinds of lives of the servants of God, the *active* and the *contemplative*; or, if you please, two different kinds of functions of a Christian life, the one consisting in *action*, the other in *contemplation*; the one in a variety of good works, done with a good intention, for the service of Christ; the other in a more quiet retirement, and recollection, and a more close attention to God, by mental prayer. Both of these are good; both of them highly commendable: because both of them tend to the love and service of God: but the latter is preferred by the judgment of truth itself: because it makes that its occupation here, which is to be its eternal employment hereafter. *Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.* Learn thou, my soul, of Martha, ever to direct thy common actions, with all the functions and labours of thy calling, by a pure intention, to the service of Christ: learn to sanctify them all by calling in Mary, that is, recollection and prayer, to thy assistance. But learn also of Mary, to retire, as often as thou canst, from the noise and hurry of the world, to the feet of Christ: learn of her, as often as thou hast thy choice, to choose that better part of contemplation and love, which is to be thy eternal occupation.

Consider 3dly, that this gospel is applied by the church, to the Blessed Virgin, and to her assumption: because she was the happy woman, that *received in an extraordinary manner, Christ into her house*: she perfectly fulfilled in her life, both the functions of Martha and of Mary; of Martha, in the services, she rendered to our Lord, in his humanity, for all the thirty years he was under her roof; and of Mary, by the perpetual contemplation and love of his divinity; so that even in the midst of the duties of the active life, the eye of her heart was always upon her God: she ever attended to the *one thing necessary*: she ever made *choise of the better part*, and on this day of her exaltation, she was put in the full possession of it for eternity: according to that, *Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.*

Conclude, O my soul, to follow her great example, in choosing always the better part, that thou mayest partake in her everlasting happiness.

AUG. 17. *On resignation to the will of God, in all our sufferings.*

CONSIDER first, that it is a most certain truth, that nothing happens in the world, excepting sin, which does not come directly from the hand of God; and which is not the effect of his holy will. So that all our sufferings, of what kind soever they may be, are all ordained by him, and all thus pass through his hands, before they can reach us. Which is so true, that even those sufferings, which seem to be brought upon us, immediately, by the wickedness of men; are in effect, all of them sent by the ordinance of God: who though he abhors whatsoever there is of malice and sin, in the will, or design, of the men, or devils, whom he suffers to afflict or persecute us; yet most certainly, he not only permits, but absolutely wills the afflictions, trials or punishments, which we suffer on these occasions. And it is his intention, and our duty, that in all these sufferings, we should not look so much at the visible hand of the unjust creature, as at the invisible hand of the just God: and that in all these cases, we should in such manner detest the malice or wickedness of the men that afflict us, as ever to submit to, and even to embrace the chastisements of the Lord, as of a tender Father, who often makes use of a rod, for the correction of his children, which he afterwards casts into the fire. O how resigned should we be, if we always remembered these truths!

Consider 2dly, that all our sufferings, not only come to us from the hand of God, but are also all designed by him for our greater good. He is the best of Fathers: his fatherly providence, and his tender love for us, exceeds all that we can express or conceive: the holy scriptures are full of repeated declarations of this truth: it cannot be called in question, without contradicting both the divine word, and the perpetual experience

rience of the servants of God. So that we ought to be always fully assured, considering God's infinite wisdom, goodness, and love for us, that all that he sends is for the best, and is indeed the best for us. See my soul, that thou always remembrest this truth, in all thy pains, sicknesses, crosses and afflictions; and in general in all things that happen to thee contrary to thy desire, expectation, or inclination. Upon all these occasions, thou must consider Jesus Christ himself as offering thee this cup, or this cross, desiring thee to receive it for his sake; and assuring thee that it shall be the means to bring thee to heaven. O! how true it is, as we shall clearly see one day in the light of God, that these very things, which we are apt to consider as evils, are indeed great and solid goods: and that through them, millions of souls will be brought to eternal happiness, which without them might have been eternally miserable. O let us learn then to resign ourselves, without reserve, to all the appointments of an all-wise and loving Providence!

Consider 3dly, the degrees by which we ought to endeavour to advance towards the perfection of this great virtue of the resignation of ourselves, in all things, to the divine will. The first and lowest is, to support at least with *patience* the evils that befall us: and this because they come from the hand of God; and humbly to submit to them, as the just punishment of our sins, saying with the prophet, *I will bear the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him*, Mich. vii. 9. and with the psalmist, under afflictions, *I was dumb, and I opened not my mouth, because it is thy doing*, Ps. xxxviii. 10. The second degree, which is much more perfect than the first, is when we not only endeavour to bear our sufferings with patience, so as not to murmur, or repine on those occasions, or otherwise offend God; but also are *ready*, and *willing to suffer*, because such is the will of God: so that the consideration of God's holy will and pleasure, makes the cross (which according to nature we dread and abhor) *agreeable* to us, inasmuch as the will of God is thereby accomplished
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in us. The third and most perfect degree of resignation, and which carries with it the perfection of divine love and charity, is, when we not only *readily* and *willingly* accept of the cross from the hand of God, but even rejoice in suffering for the love of him; and take an unspeakable content in crosses, in adversities, in humiliations, in poverty, in being condemned by the world, &c. so that we would not even wish to be without them, out of the pure love of him, who chose a suffering life for the love of us; and because the accomplishment of his will, is the whole object of our desire, of our love, and of our joy. O what a heaven should we find upon earth, if we could once arrive at this third degree of divine resignation! For what can disturb that soul, that always rejoices in the accomplishment of the will of God, and finds her pleasure and content in suffering?

Conclude to make it thy study, to ascend by these steps, of resignation to the holy will of God in all things, from virtue to virtue, till thou arrive at the top of the ladder where thou wilt find thy God, and be for ever inseparably united to him.

AUG. 18. *On self-denial.*

CONSIDER first, that the capital enemy of the love of God, and of all our good, especially of the resignation and conformity of our will to the will of God, is the vice of *self-love*, or a disorderly inclination to gratify and please ourselves; which is the unhappy consequence of the corruption of man by sin, and the fruitful parent of all our evils. All our vices and passions spring from this poisonous root; all the seven capital sins are but so many branches of this inordinate inclination to ourselves: take away *self-love*, and you will shut up all the avenues of hell, and establish every where the reign of the love of God, and a most blessed heaven upon earth. Hence the virtue of *self-denial*, the business of which is to suppress and root out this dreadful evil of *self-love*, is one of the most necessary of all Christian virtues, and must ever go hand

hand in hand, with the great virtue of conformity to the will of God: which can never take root in our souls, as long as we are unhappily attached to our own wills, and fond of gratifying our own inclinations. Hence the very first condition the Son of God requires of all that would be his disciples, is to *deny themselves*, Matt. xvi. 24. This *self-denial* is the great lesson he came down from heaven to teach. Happy we, if by his grace we can but effectually learn it in practice!

Consider 2dly, that this virtue of *self-denial* is usually called *mortification*, from a word signifying *slaying*, or *putting to death*: inasmuch as by this continual fighting against ourselves, and against our own corrupt inclinations and passions, we put to death, as it were, and *crucify the old man* of corruption, Rom. vi. 6. with his vices and sins, (according to that of the Apostle, Gal. v. 24. that *they that are of Christ have crucified their flesh, with its vices and concupiscences*) and so die to ourselves; that we may put on the new man Jesus Christ, and live in such manner to him, as to be able to say, with the same Apostle, *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me*, Gal. ii. 20. See, my soul, what this virtue of *mortification* means, which is much talked of, though little understood, and less practised: and yet no virtue is more necessary for our true welfare. We may even apply to it, what St. Paul says of *charity*, 1 Cor. xiii. that *if we speak with the tongues of men and Angels—and have the gift of prophecy, and all knowledge, and all faith, so that we could remove mountains; and are not mortified, we are nothing*: and that whatsoever other qualifications we may have, or whatsoever good we may do, as long as our passions and corrupt inclinations remain *unmortified*, we shall still be nothing in the eyes of God.

Consider 3dly, how this general mortification of our passions, and our inordinate inclinations, is every where strongly inculcated in the word of God. We are even assured there that we must hate ourselves in this life; if we hope to be either true disciples of Christ here, or

to be eternally happy with him hereafter, St. *Luke* xiv. 26. and St. *John* xii. 25. That *if we live according to the flesh, we shall die; but if by the spirit we mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live*, Rom. viii. 13. And that *they who are in the flesh*, that is, they who are unmortified, *cannot please God*, v. 8. Besides many other texts, which abundantly demonstrate, that no one can be a good Christian, without waging a perpetual war against his own sensual inclinations, and diligently *taking up the cross of daily mortification*. Hence *the flesh*, with its passions and lusts, is always reckoned by divines amongst the three great enemies of the soul: and is indeed of all the three by far the most dangerous enemy. Because the *world* and the *devil*, with all their suggestions, would not easily draw us into sin and hell, if our own flesh, that is, our corrupt inclinations and passions did not pave the way, and furnish them with the arms, with which they fight against us. The world, and the devil, besiege us from without; but could never force their way into the soul, if our own evil inclinations did not hold a correspondence with them, and open the gates of the soul, to let them in.

Conclude if thou desirest to overcome the world and the devil, to make it thy business to subdue the flesh, and to bring it under subjection, by wholesome self-denials and mortifications. Without this restraint upon thy passions and inclinations, there will be *no soundness* in thy soul; *the whole head will be sick, and the whole heart sad*, *Isai.* i. 5, 6.

AUG. 19. *On the mortification of the interior.*

CONSIDER first, that as the business of *mortification* in general is to reform the old man, and to retrench all that is evil and vicious in us; or that might disqualify us for that union with God, by divine love, for which he made us, and gave us these immortal souls; by tying down our hearts or minds to created objects: so that kind of *mortification* in particular ought to be most diligently exercised by a Christian, that refines, polishes, and reforms our *interiour*, in which we
ever

ever carry about with us the image of God; and in which he delights to reside; provided he finds it in a proper condition to receive and entertain him; that is, provided he finds it *mortified*. O my soul, what ought we not then to do, to qualify ourselves for so great a happiness, as this, of having God with us, and of being interiorly united to him? In order to this, thou must observe well all the irregularities, which thy inward powers and faculties are liable to. that thou mayest retrench them by mortification; and so purify thy interior. Believe me, this mortification of thy interior, is an exercise far more difficult, but withal far more necessary for thee, and far more acceptable to God, than any corporal austerities whatsoever.

Consider 2dly, what those irregularities are, of thy inward powers and faculties, that stand in need of being retrenched by mortification. Alas! if thou wilt but give thyself the leisure, to study well what passes in thy own interior, and to know thyself; thou wilt find thy *understanding* liable to pride, self-conceit, self-sufficiency, presumption, a variety of empty curiosities, and many errors, of dangerous consequence in practice: such errors I mean, as oppose the maxims of the Gospel; and represent things in false lights, and weigh them in false weights, so as to influence the poor soul to prefer the temporal before the eternal. Thou wilt find thy *judgment* liable to be rash and precipitate, and quite clouded with the exhalations that arise from thy passions and self-love. Thou wilt find thy *memory* liable to many vain wanderings and evasions, ever full of empty things, and forgetful of God. Thou wilt find thy *imagination* ever dissipated, in the pursuit of worldly toys, vain schemes, or sinful objects: and all thy *affections*, appetites and desires, strangely bent upon evil; and averse to every thing that is painful or laborious. See, my soul, what a piece of work is here cut out for thee; and how much thou hast to mortify in thy interior, to qualify it for a union with God!

Consider 3dly, that amongst the powers of the soul, that which most of all stands in need of being mortified

fied is the *will*: as the will is, or should be, the mistress of the rest; and is obliged to keep them all in order; which she can never do, if she herself be disorderly. Hence the Holy Ghost admonishes us, by the mouth of the wise man, *Ecclus. xviii. 30, 31. Go not after thy own lusts, but turn away from thy own will: if thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies.* Hence also he tells us, *Proverbs xxix. 15. The child that is left to his own will bringeth his mother to shame.* Because this will of ours, when indulged, is capable of hurrying us away to all that is evil. And therefore we are called upon in the gospel to *hate our own souls (animam suam)* that is, *our own wills*, in this world, if we hope to be happy in the next. For *the fire of hell*, says St. Bernard, *can burn nothing but our own will.*

Conclude to apply thyself seriously to this most necessary mortification of thy interior, and more especially of thy own will and desires. This mortification is to be exercised, first, by denying to thy own will whatever it craves contrary to the will of God; secondly, by accustoming thyself in things indifferent, often to contradict thy own will; and never to do any thing merely to gratify thy own inclinations: thirdly, by curbing, even in things that appear to be good, that eagerness and hurry, which nature, passion, and self-love are apt to prompt thee to; and setting before thy eyes, and quietly following, on these occasions, the will of God, and not thy own,

AUG. 20. *On the mortification of the passions.*

CONSIDER first, the necessity we lay under, ever since the corruption of our nature by sin, of keeping our passions also in order, by a continual mortification of them. Before man was corrupted by original sin, his whole soul was regular and orderly, and all his passions were under proper command. But as soon as the superior part of the soul had withdrawn herself from her allegiance to God, the inferior part began to rebel

rebel against the superior; and all its appetites and passions were let loose, to run into all manner of disorders; because the bridle of original justice was now flung off; with which they were kept in, and restrained before. Hence arises an indispensable necessity of our ever mortifying our passions, if we would secure our souls. For as our nature is now corrupted, our love, and our hatred, our desires, and our fears, our joy and our grief; our anger, &c. all share in this corruption, and are all apt to be disorderly, if not curbed, and corrected by daily mortification.

Consider 2dly, that this most necessary branch of mortification, which relates to our passions, chiefly consists in the duly regulating all their motions; by directing them, in a proper manner, to their proper objects, and restraining all their excesses: so that they may all be brought under subjection to reason and religion; and made even serviceable to the true welfare of our souls. Thus we are to regulate our *love*, our *desires*, and our *joy*, by turning them away, from all disorderly affection to perishable creatures, to the living God: from running after vanity and lying fooleries, to the pursuit of virtue and truth: and by keeping them always within their proper bounds, that they may not disturb the peace of the soul, or distract its application to God. In like manner we must mortify our fear, our anger, and all our other passions, by watching over all their motions, and restraining all their disorders and excesses. O how happy are they, who by the daily practice of this mortification, are arrived at that command of their passions, which is the blessed parent of true peace, and a certain image of heaven upon earth. Happy they, who turn all their *fear*, and all their *love* to God, and to what God would have them *fear* and *love*: who *hate* nothing but the offence of God: *desire* nothing but the will of God: *rejoice* in nothing but God: *grieve* at nothing but what is contrary to his honour, and the good of souls: and are *angry* at nothing but sin!

Consider 3dly, that as *love* is the strongest of all the passions, and that which principally influences all the rest; so the regulating our love, and mortifying its disorders, ought to be at all times, the great object of the Christian's attention. My love is my weight, says St. Augustine, thither am I carried whithersoever I am carried. Now our love is regular and orderly, when we love all things according to the great rule of the will of God; when we love our friends in God, and our enemies for God's sake; when we weigh all things in the scales of the sanctuary, and prize them according to the weight they have there; and allow them no other love than what will stand this test. But then on the other hand, whatever love, whether of any person, or any creature, or any thing else, offers to captivate our affections, or to divide, or take off any part of our heart from God; or to carry us any way out of the bounds of moderation, reason or religion; is disorderly, and must be restrained, corrected and mortified. All such love as this strikes at the very root of the welfare and salvation of the soul, by violating the very first, and chiefest of all God's commandments; which is to love the Lord our God with *all our heart*.

Conclude to watch over all thy passions, that thou mayest keep them all in subjection; but principally to take care to restrain thy love, and thy desires, from all unlawful, dangerous or vain objects; and from all excess or immoderation, in being too strongly bent, or too eagerly carried, even to lawful ones. For whatsoever the object be, it is a criminal love to love any thing more than God.

AUG. 21. *On the mortification of the predominant passion.*

CONSIDER first, that the passions of love and desire, when they are unmortified, branch out into all manner of vice and vicious inclinations; commonly ranged under the seven heads, which are usually called the seven capital sins: though St. John brings them into a narrower compass, when he reduces them all to these three, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, 1 John ii. 16. Now amongst these vicious inclinations, which wage war against the soul, there is usually some one or other, that is stronger, or more violent than the rest; or that occasions more, or greater sins: and this is named by divines *the predominant passion*; the mortification of which is one of the chief businesses of a spiritual life. For this predominant passion being, as it were, the captain and commander of the rest, when this is overthrown, the rest will more easily be subdued, and brought under: as when their champion Goliath was slain, the Philistines were all immediately put to flight.

Consider 2dly, that as this predominant passion, this reigning love, this strongest desire, or affection, whatever the object of it may be, has already unhappily gained the heart; it is but too apt to impose upon the poor soul with specious pretexts, in order to keep its hold, and to maintain its ground, against the remonstrances of conscience, and all the calls and graces of heaven. It is the Agag, which the deluded soul, by a false compassion, would willingly spare; though with the risk of being cast off by God, as Saul was, for so doing, 1 Sam. xv. Ah! Christians, deceive not then yourselves: this predominant passion, this favourite affection, which has taken possession of your heart, is indeed the capital enemy of God and your souls; it must be slain, it must be sacrificed to the living God. Beware of the traitor, which you carry about with you: suffer him not to impose upon you: it is very easy, if you have not a mind to be wilfully blind, to discover

what he would be at; because upon the least examination of your hearts, you will find him always busy in undermining the reign of the love of God; thrusting himself upon his throne; and setting up an idol in his temple: by challenging the chiefest place in your heart, to the prejudice of divine love.

Consider 3dly, what you must do: in order to get rid of this worst of all your enemies. O! you must make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the depth of his malice, and all his stratagems; that you may not be surprized, or imposed upon by him; you must observe all his motions, to resist them at the very beginning; you must study all the secret springs, by which he acts upon the heart, and sets the other passions on work, to fulfil his irregular inclinations. Ah! Christians, it is of infinite importance in this spiritual warfare, to know the true state of your interior, and to watch all the motions and secret ambushes of your enemies! You must also single out this enemy, in such manner, as though you are not to allow any one of your passions, or vices, to remain unresisted in your soul, yet you are in a more especial manner to turn all your forces against this predominant passion; by directing your daily, and most fervent prayers, your confessions and communions, your particular examinations every night, and the rest of your spiritual exercises, towards the total subduing of this evil, and acquiring the contrary virtue.

Conclude, if you hope to succeed in the great work of the mortification of your passions, to begin by declaring an eternal war against their chief; and never ceasing to attack him, upon all occasions, till you have brought him down. All the rest will yield themselves up, when he is subdued: and you will begin to relish the sweets of peace and true liberty; which you will never enjoy, till you have broken the chains with which he enslaves you.

AUG. 22. *On the mortification of the sensual appetite.*

CONSIDER first, that our *sensual appetite*, that is, the strong inclination we have to gratify our senses, and to indulge them in their pleasures, is one of the most dangerous enemies the soul has; and stands most in need of being restrained, and corrected by *mortification*. The flesh, with its senses, was designed to be the servant of the soul; and to be subservient to its true welfare and happiness. But if the sensual appetite be not kept under subjection, by mortification, the servant will quickly become mistress, and the poor soul will be made her slave, and will be dragged along by her irregular inclinations into all kinds of evils. Our sensuality therefore must be mortified: we must absolutely deny ourselves all *unlawful* sensual and carnal pleasures: we must fly them more than death: we must retrench all excess, and immoderation, in the use, even of lawful pleasures and diversions: we must never suffer ourselves to affect them, much less to have a passion for them: we must accustom ourselves to curb and thwart the inclinations of our senses, in things lawful, or indifferent, that so we may acquire a greater facility in overcoming our sensual appetite, when it inclines to things unlawful; and may at the same time punish our having formerly indulged ourselves in them. In fine we must never do any thing *merely* for our pleasure.

Consider 2dly, the opposition there is between a *sensual* life, or a life of pleasure; and a truly Christian life, which is agreeable to the maxims of the gospel, and to the practice of Christ, and of all his Saints; who have taken up their crosses to follow him; and have always borne in their bodies the mortification of Jesus, and have been, as it were, crucified with him. This opposition is so great, that the Apostle cannot speak without weeping of those half Christians, who give themselves up to their pleasures; of whom he says, *Philip. iii. 18, 19, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; that their end is destruction; that their God is*

their belly; that they glory in their shame, and mind only earthly things. Christ did not study his own pleasure: *He did not please himself,* Rom. xv. 3. His whole life was a cross, which he voluntarily chose for the glory of his Father, and for the love of us. The Apostle *chastized his body, and brought it into subjection* by voluntary mortifications, 1 Cor. ix. 17: all the Saints have walked in the same footsteps: they have all *crucified their own flesh,* Gal. v. 24. *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,* and none but they that use violence upon themselves *bear it away,* Matt. xi. 12. And can Christians think that a sensual life will ever bring them thither? No: *true wisdom is not found in the land of them that live in delights,* Job xxviii. 13. And we are not to imagine we may give ourselves up to our pleasures here, and yet promise ourselves *the good things of the Lord in the land of the living* hereafter, St. Luke xvi. 25.

Consider 3dly, that there is no one, but who may, and ought to practise the mortification of the flesh, and of its sensual appetites; and that too by restraining it often from things otherwise lawful. The guilty must do it to punish themselves for their past sins: the innocent must do it, in order to keep themselves from falling into sin; which will be the unavoidable consequence of their not mortifying, and keeping under so dangerous an enemy. None must excuse themselves here, on account of their want of strength or health: it is easy for a Christian of a good will, to contrive, and to put in execution a variety of self-denials, that neither require any bodily strength, or prejudice the health. If we are not able to wear the hair shirt, or to use the discipline, if we cannot fast, or lie upon the hard floor, we may at least retrench many superfluities, and affected niceties, in our eating, drinking and cloathing, &c. we may shorten the time we give to unnecessary lying in bed; we may upon many occasions withdraw ourselves, from such things as we are inclined to, and which perhaps are less wholesome for us; and chuse such things as are less agreeable to our own inclinations:

tions: in fine we may daily and hourly mortify, in many things, our eyes, our ears, our tongue, &c.

Conclude to make it thy daily business, to mortify, on every occasion, thy sensual appetite, lest otherwise *flesh and blood* prevail over thy soul, and she fall an everlasting prey to her mortal enemies.

AUG. 23. *On the mortification of curiosity.*

CONSIDER first, that besides the evil of *sensuality*, which must be mortified, in order to subdue the *concupiscence of the flesh*; there is another dangerous evil, that must also be mortified, in order to subdue the *concupiscence of the eyes*; and that is the vice of *curiosity*, which St. Augustine (*Confessions*, L. c. 35.) supposes to be understood by this name. A dangerous evil indeed, and the mother of many evils; which makes men busy themselves about things, either hurtful, or at least nothing at all to their purpose, whilst they neglect things profitable and necessary, yea *the only thing necessary*. Alas! how many things are there that men take much pains to inquire into, which are dangerous to their souls? How many which are absolutely useless and unprofitable, and which answer no manner of end, either of the glory of God, or of their own, or neighbours good? And how much loss is here of their precious time! What dissipation of thoughts! What distractions in prayer; What forgetfulness of God and eternity! What an enslaving of the soul to mere toys and vanities! And what account will they be able to give at the last day, of a life spent so unprofitably; so unworthily of the great end, for which they came hither; and so perversely; because so contrary to the holy will and law of their Maker! Ah the dismal consequences of indulging this unhappy curiosity!

Consider 2dly, the particulars, in which we must mortify *the lust of the eyes*, if we hope to keep the soul pure; and to prevent death from coming in at those windows. We must *turn our eyes away from vanity*; and much more from all such objects as allure the soul

to impure love: an unguarded glance of an eye has a thousand and a thousand times been the death of the soul. Unhappy they who are ever indulging their curiosity, in looking after such dangerous objects! And much more unhappy they, who affect by their light carriage and indecent dress, to draw the eyes and hearts of others to lust! For the same reason, we must mortify also our curiosity, with relation to publick shews and comedies, as being full of dangers, and of allurements to lust. As also with relation to the reading all such books, as being either lewd, or profane, or irreligious, tend to debauch the soul, and to draw her into sin. In which number romances, play-books, and such like, are certainly to be comprized: because they only serve to heighten the passions, to soften the soul, and dispose her to carnal love; and to shut out from her, the spirit of devotion and of the love of God.

Consider 3dly, the necessity of mortifying in like manner, the curiosity of the ears; since these also are an avenue, through which, if not well guarded, death oftentimes makes its way into the soul. This branch of curiosity must be corrected, first by stopping the ears to all loose narrations, jests, or songs; all which are apt to convey a mortal poison into the soul: secondly, by restraining them from hearkening to scandal and detraction; with danger of either taking pleasure in it, or countenancing and encouraging so great an evil: thirdly, by keeping a guard upon them, to prevent their taking in a still more dreadful infection, by hearkening to irreligious and impious discourses, which strike at the Deity, and his revealed truths; or tend to the discouraging virtue, or promoting vice. In a word, the Christian, that would save his soul, must ever have a guard upon himself, in all company and conversation, lest the curiosity of his ears induce him to hearken with pleasure to any such speeches, or words, as may let in the corruption of sin into his heart.

Conclude ever to watch and pray against the evil of curiosity, which has so many ways of poisoning the soul. But if thou wouldst indulge the desire of knowledge

ledge (which is so natural to man) let it be by inquiring into useful truths, and such as may serve to bring thee to the sovereign truth. *But wo to them that enquire of men after many curious things, and at the same time are but little curious of knowing the way to serve God.* Kempis.

AUG. 24. *On the gospel for St. Bartholomew, Luke vi. 12, &c.*

CONSIDER first, how our Lord designing to make choice of his twelve Apostles, by way of preparation for this great work, *went out into a mountain to pray, and there passed the whole night in the prayer of God*, that is, in most earnest and fervent prayer. Learn from hence, my soul, in all thou takest in hand, to begin with prayer, in order to draw down the blessing of heaven upon thy undertaking: learn also of thy Saviour to be fervent and earnest in thy prayers: learn to retire with him, as often as thou canst, for thy private devotion, from the noise and distractions of the world. Recollection, solitude and the silence of the night are great helps to devotion. O! what oughtest not thou to do, to secure the salvation of thy own soul, when the Son of God has passed even whole nights in prayer for the love of thee? He stood not in need of prayer for himself; but has given us an example, to teach us how much we ought to take to heart, upon all occasions, this exercise of fervent prayer.

Consider 2dly, the fruits of this night's prayer, in the great things our Lord performed the next morning; which we may reduce under three heads. 1. His choice of his twelve Apostles. 2. His divine sermon on the mount. 3. The many miracles he wrought, when as the gospel informs us: *a very great multitude of people, came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and a virtue went out from him, and healed them all*, v. 17, 18, 19. Contemplate my soul all these wonders of divine grace, wrought in consequence of the prayer of that night. See a company of poor, weak, illiterate fishermen, wonderfully advanced on a sudden to be the
great

great pillars and founders of the church of God, and prime ministers of his kingdom upon earth. Bow thyself down, and embrace the heavenly law, published on this occasion by thy Redeemer, in that admirable sermon, in which with a most amiable simplicity, joined with a wonderful authority, he has laid down all the fundamentals of Christian morality: and do thou also learn to *approach in spirit to his feet* with his disciples *to receive of his doctrine*, Deut. xxxiii. 3. and to be healed by him of all thy diseases. O! ever remember, that the true way to all good, and the source of all light, grace, and benediction, is to go up with him to the mountain, and to converse with God by recollection and prayer.

Consider 3dly, what we read here in the gospel: that *all the multitude sought to touch our Lord: for virtue went out from him, and healed all*, verse 19. If virtue went out from our Lord to heal the *corporal* diseases, of all them that touched him, whilst he was here visibly present, during his mortal life; can we suppose he has either less power, or less goodness, to heal the *spiritual* maladies of all such as properly apply to him, now he has entered into his glory, after shedding his precious blood for us? No certainly, but as *all power is given him in heaven and earth*: so *virtue never ceases to go out from him*, in favour of all that spiritually approach to him, and that seek to keep him company in their own interior: and how much more in favour of them, who verily and indeed touch him, and receive him within their house, by means of the holy communion. O let us always endeavour to keep close to him; and his virtue will always be with us.

Conclude to go up with Christ, upon all occasions, into the mountain, by retirement and prayer. In all thy deliberations thou must consult this oracle. In all dangers let this be thy refuge. Run hither to be delivered from all thy evils. Here thou wilt meet with thy sovereign Good.

AUG. 25. *On humility.*

CONSIDER first, that the most necessary of all mortifications, is that which teaches us to mortify our *pride*, by the virtue of *humility*. It is humility is the favourite virtue of heaven: all other virtues are nothing without it: they even degenerate into vices, when they are tainted with pride. Humility makes us become *as little ones*; low, mean, and despicable in our own eyes; and willing to be such in the eyes of others. Humility makes us quite sensible of our own nothing, of our misery, and sinfulness; teaches us to divest ourselves of all conceit of our own performances, or abilities; and to ascribe all good to God alone. Humility sits down in the lowest place; makes us sincerely prefer all others before ourselves; and pretend to no esteem, or praise, or honour, or glory, as due to us, or to any excellence of our own: but to be fully and feelingly convinced, not only that we are good for nothing of ourselves, fit for nothing but to do mischief, and deserve nothing but punishment; but also that it is owing to God's pure goodness, that we are [†]suffered to live upon earth; and that any one at all shews us the least regard, or does us the least service; and that all God's creatures have not a general licence, to rise up against us, and to punish us in all manner of ways, for our offences against their creator; in fine that we are not long since in hell.

Consider 2dly, that what makes this virtue of humility so acceptable to God, is because God is the *Truth*, and cannot help loving the truth. Now all pride is made up of errors, and lies; in taking ourselves to be something; in pretending to what is not our due; or ascribing to ourselves what belongs not to us; or in fine in being puffed up with the gifts of God, as if they were our own property, or of our own growth. And what is all this but *lies*? *Sacrilegious lies*, that offer to rob God of his glory; to challenge to ourselves what belongs to him; and Satan like to pretend to set ourselves on his throne! But *Humility* goes always hand in
hand

hand with *truth*; and ever grounds herself upon the truth; by giving always to God what belongs to God, and to man what belongs to man: by acknowledging, with all simplicity, conviction, and affection, God to be *all*, and man to be *nothing*: and by ever ascribing to God, whatever there is of good in one's self, or in any thing created; and reserving to one's self nothing but one's own defects. This is true humility: this is the *Truth* that shall stand for ever. This was found, in the greatest perfection, in the most eminent Saints upon earth: This shall reign with them in heaven, for all eternity; where God shall be *all in all*, for ever.

Consider 3dly, that humility is not only a virtue absolutely necessary for arriving at Christian perfection: but that there is even no salvation at all for us without it. There is no going to heaven without God's grace: Now *God resists the proud, and gives his grace to the humble*, St. James iv. 6. And our Lord expressly assures us, that *except we become as little children*, by humility, *we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xviii. 3. No my soul, let us not deceive ourselves: there is no room in heaven for pride. Satan and his companions were cast down from thence by their *pride*: and their places are not to be filled up but by the *humble*. Only they that *humble themselves* upon earth, shall be *exalted* in heaven. The most high and the most holy, who inhabiteth eternity, will only *dwell with a contrite and humble spirit*, Isai. lvii. 15: and will have respect to none, to bring them to his heavenly kingdom, but such as in their mortal life by the virtue of humility are *poor and little, and of a contrite spirit*; and *tremble at his words*, Isai. lxvi. 2.

Conclude, if thou wouldst have any part with God in his eternal kingdom, to be ever little and humble here upon earth. The more thou floopest down, and castest thyself under the feet of all, by humility; the more God will lift thee up, and exalt thee: for he alone is truly great and high, and ever looks down, with a favourable eye, upon them that are low and humble, to exalt them here by his grace, and hereafter in his glory.

But

But as for such as lift up their heads by pride, and take themselves to be great and high, he keeps them off at a distance; and regards them with horreur. *For the proud and arrogant are an abomination to the Lord,* Prov. xvi. 5.

AUG. 26. *On the school of humility.*

CONSIDER first, that the school, in which we are to learn true humility, is the serious consideration, and true knowledge of God, and of ourselves. To know God, and to know ourselves, is the true Science of the Saints. These two branches of Christian knowledge usually go hand in hand, and mutually promote and assist one another. The more we know our God, and the infinity of all his perfections, the more sensible we are of our own nothing, and of our total dependance on him: and the more we know ourselves, and all our miseries and sins, the more clearly we perceive, that God alone is good; and that he is infinitely good in bearing with us. Here we learn true humility: because here we learn to annihilate ourselves in the sight of that infinite majesty, in whose presence the whole universe dwindles away to a mere nothing; and both heaven and earth quite disappear. Here we learn to ascribe all good to this sovereign good, and nothing of good to ourselves. Here we learn to descend even beneath our nothing, by the consideration of our sins, and of the hell we have deserved by them. Here in fine we learn to have so great a sense of our manifold miseries and sins, as to keep our eyes only open to our own defects, and shut to those of others; and by that means we learn to despise no one but ourselves, and to prefer all others before ourselves.

Consider 2dly, O my soul, and in order to acquire a more perfect knowledge of thyself, that so thou mayst always be little and humble; take a more particular review of thy whole self, and seriously reflect on what thou art, both as a mortal and as a sinner. That thy extraction is from nothing; that thou wast conceived and

and born in sin; that thou art perpetually liable to innumerable miseries, both of soul and body; that all thy powers and faculties are strangely impaired and disordered by sin; that thou art ever prone to evil, and hard to be brought to good; that thy passions are headstrong and rebellious; thy affections ever bent upon vain toys, and lying fooleries; and thy thoughts, words, and actions full of corruption. In the mean while thy time is hastening on without intermission to its last period: death is following close at thy heels, and will quickly overtake thee: and send away this body of thine, which thou art so fond of, to be the food of maggots and worms; and the poor soul to another world, to be tried there at an unerring tribunal; under a dreadful uncertainty, whether she shall not be delivered up to be an eternal prey to merciless devils. And is it possible that we should be sensible of all these humbling truths, and should seriously reflect on them, and yet be proud!

Consider 3dly, that amongst all these humbling considerations, that which ought most effectually to abate, or rather quite beat down our pride, is the remembrance of our sins, and of what we have deserved by them. Ah! wretched creature that I am, I have been guilty of mortal sin, of high treason against my God; and that perhaps a thousand times; and consequently I have deserved a thousand hells: and what can I have to be proud of? Ah! what a wretched figure did my soul then make in the sight of God and his angels! How odious, how filthy, how abominable was she all that time! And is she not so still? She stood then condemned to hell: and has that sentence ever been reversed? What pretensions then can I have to any honour, esteem, or regard from any one? What title to any favour from God, or man? What just reason to complain, if even all God's creatures should combine against me, to revenge upon me the wrong done to their Creator; and should tread me under their feet, to punish the pride, by which I have lifted up my head against the Almighty? What would all this be in comparison

parison with my deserts? How then shall I dare to entertain any proud thought, either of conceit of myself, or of seeking to be esteemed by others, or of resenting any affront, contradiction, or contempt from any man; since I have no title to any thing else but hell? And what room can there be for glorying there?

Conclude daily to frequent this school of humility, by studying well to know thy God, and to know thyself: this kind of science is infinitely more to thy purpose, than all other arts and sciences put together: all which indeed would only serve to puff thee up, and to betray thee to thy mortal enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, if not accompanied with the knowledge of God, and of thyself.

AUG. 27. On the master of whom we are to learn humility.

CONSIDER first, that in order to teach us humility, God has sent us down a master from heaven, even his own eternal Son, who is no less God than his Father. Of what importance then must it be for us, my soul, to study well this great lesson, which the Son of God himself has come down from heaven to teach! O who could have thought, that we who are of ourselves so very little, so very wretched and contemptible, so near the brink of nothing; and by our sins, beneath nothing; should be so strangely conceited of ourselves, and so monstruously corrupted with pride and self-love, that nothing less should suffice to teach us to be little and humble, than the great example of the Son of God himself, coming down from heaven, and becoming a little one amongst us; yea as *a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people*, Ps. xxi. And yet even so, how few are there of us, that are content to be little and contemptible with him! How few are willing to be scholars of this heavenly master; or even to submit to the least humiliations, for the love of him!

Consider 2dly, the sweet invitation of our Lord, St. Matt. xi. 28, 29, calling us all to *come to him, and to take his yoke upon us, and to learn of him, because he is meek and humble of heart*; and promising us *refreshment and rest for our souls*, upon our compliance with his invitation. O what encouragements are here, my soul, to engage us to spare no pains in learning in this heavenly school of humility, opened by the Son of God, and to make us quite in love with this study of Truth! A most excellent master; the Son of God himself, the sovereign truth! Blessed school-fellows, all the saints of God, and favourites of heaven! A most excellent science, which brings the soul through the gate of her own nothing to the contemplation of her God, the pure truth! Excellent fruits, the peace of the soul, refreshment and rest from her labours and burdens; a victory over all her passions; and a happy acquisition of all other virtues! O let us frequent this heavenly school of Christ.

Consider 3dly, the great example of humility, given us by the Son of God, *who being in the form of God, (true God, no less than his Father;) and therefore thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet debased himself, taking the form of a servant, viz. the servile nature of man, and humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the most disgraceful death of the cross,* Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8. His whole life was full of lessons of humility. He chose to be born in a stable; to be circumcised as a sinner; to flee into Egypt, as if he were unable to resist a petty mortal; to be brought up in poverty, and labour; to work at a mean mechanick trade; to be obedient to his creatures; to be baptized amongst sinners; to suffer himself to be tempted by the devil; to make choice of the poorer and meaner sort of men for his companions, and disciples; to make himself as their servant, even to the washing their feet; to fly from honours, and applause; to conceal his glory; to enjoin secrecy with regard to his wonderful works; and to embrace on all occasions, both in life and death, whatsoever was most humbling, and most despicable in the eyes

eyes of men. O divine Jesus, teach us to follow thy blessed example! O teach us to be meek and humble of heart, like thee; that so we may be thy disciples indeed!

Conclude to set always before your eyes the life and doctrine of Jesus Christ; in order to conform yourselves to his divine maxims, and examples; and to learn of him to be truly humble. No other master but he can effectually teach you this divine lesson.

AUG. 28. *On the fruits of humility.*

CONSIDER first, that *humility* is the ground on which other virtues must be built; they have all of them a necessary dependance on this foundation; and are all of them more or less perfect, in proportion to the degree in which we possess humility. *Faith* itself, which is commonly looked upon the foundation of all our good, absolutely depends upon *humility*: even that humility, which obliges the soul to adore what she cannot understand, to submit to the most humbling truths, and to *cast down every height that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every understanding to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. Because as all heresies proceed from pride, self-conceit, and refusing to give up, or submit one's own judgment to divine authority; so nothing else but humility can secure the soul from this danger, and keep her firm to her faith. In like manner *divine hope* depends also upon humility, which alone can keep the soul in the golden mean, between the two extremes of diffidence and presumption: whilst it teaches her to have no opinion, or confidence in herself, nor any ways to build on her own sandy bottom, but wholly upon the rock, which can never fail us, of the power, goodness and mercy of God. For the less we trust in ourselves; the more we trust in God. And thus we shall always find that they who are the most humble, have also the strongest faith, and hope, and are usually instruments in the hand of God of his greatest works.

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Consider adly, that *divine charity*, the queen of all virtues, as to both her branches, viz. both the love of God, and the love of our neighbours, has also a close connection with humility, and can never maintain her ground in our souls, without being supported by humility. Because humility furnishes the soul with the most pressing motives, to assist her to love her God: humility sets his goodness in its proper light; makes the soul admire that he being what he is, should have any regard to her, or even bear with such a sinful wretch as she is: humility teaches her that she is nothing, and that God is the great *All*; infinitely good in himself, and infinitely good to her: and indeed this infinite goodness of God, which is the proper object of divine love, is never rightly apprehended, but by the humble. And as to that other branch of charity, that relates to our neighbours, it is very evident it can never be maintained but by humility: for all the vices that oppose and destroy fraternal charity, such as hatred, envy, contention, rash judgment, detraction, anger, &c. all spring from pride; and are not to be vanquished, but by true humility; which teaches us to prefer all others before ourselves, and to be angry with no one but ourselves.

Consider adly, that *prayer*, which is the general means of all our good, must also be presented before the throne of God, and recommended by humility; or else it will never be effectual with God: but when it is accompanied with humility, it can do all things. The prayer of him that humbles himself, says the wise man, *Eccclus. xxxv. 21. shall pierce the clouds—* and will not depart till the most high behold him, viz. with a favourable eye, to grant his petition. For as the Psalmist assures us, *Pf. ci. 18. God hath regard to the prayer of the humble, and despiseth not their petitions. And from the beginning the proud have never been acceptable to him: but the prayer of the humble, and of the meek hath always pleased him. Judith ix. 10. Even the prayer of the greatest sinners, when it is presented with a contrite and humbled heart is not despised by him, Pf. l. As evidently appears*

appears in the case of the publican. *Luke xviii.* who by this one short prayer, *O God be merciful to me a sinner,* accompanied with a profound humility, and a perfect contrition, was immediately justified. O blessed humility, what canst thou not effect! O dear Lord, teach us to be humble!

Conclude, if thou desirest to raise in thy soul the fabrick of virtue, to lay in the first place the foundation of humility; and the higher thou hopest to erect this fabrick, the lower must thou sink the foundation, by a more profound humility. Virtue without this foundation will prove no better than a house built upon sand, which at the first storm or inundation will fall to ruin.

AUG. 29. *On other fruits of humility.*

CONSIDER first, that the moral virtues, as well as the theological, have all of them a necessary dependance on humility. That *prudence* will come to nothing, which is self-conceited, and builds upon the devices of man, rather than upon the light and grace of God, procured by *humble* prayer. *Justice* will be deficient in many of its branches, if corrupted by pride; which always makes men partial to themselves, and so full of themselves, as to be ever ready to judge, censure, despise and condemn their neighbours; and unwilling to regulate their thoughts, words and deeds, by that golden rule of doing in all things as they would be done by. That *fortitude* will fail; when it comes to the trial, which for want of humility, is built upon sand, and not upon the rock. And that *temperance* can never be perfect, which only with-holds the sensual appetite from excess, and does not withal restrain the irregularities of the other passions, and qualify the fumes of pride, that they may not turn the head, with self-conceit: now this is the proper business of humility; and can never be effected without humility.

Consider 2dly, that not only the four *cardinal* virtues, but all the others depend in like manner on the foundation of humility. *Mekness*, which restrains, anger,

anger, and bears, with equality of soul, all affronts and provocations, goes always hand in hand with *humility*, and is recommended to us jointly with humility, by the great example of our Lord: learn of me, saith he, *for I am meek and humble of heart*. *Poverty of spirit* (which disengages the soul from the love of the world) is either *humility* itself, or the offspring of *humility*. *Purity*, and *chastity* can never be maintained, but by *humility*: the most shameful falls into the worst of impurities are often the punishment of pride, *Rom. i. 24*. *Modesty*, when it only regulates the exterior, and is not accompanied with *humility* of heart, is but hypocritical and pharisaical; and deserves not the name of virtue. *Obedience* is the favourite daughter of *humility*, as *disobedience* is the first born of *pride*. *Patience* under crosses and sufferings, springs also from *humility*, which teaches us to *humble* ourselves under the mighty hand of God, in all his appointments; ever to kiss the rod; and to be convinced that what we suffer is nothing to what we deserve. In a word, a perpetual conformity with the blessed will of God in all things is ever the inseparable companion of true *humility*; and brings along with it to the soul the happy fruits of *tranquility* and *peace*; which are the joint offspring of these two virtues.

Consider 3dly, that *humility* is also the parent of these two necessary virtues of *penitence* and *self-denial*. Because the more *humble* we are, the more we know ourselves, and the greater sense we have of our sins; and consequently the greater horror and hatred for them, and the greater desire of punishing them by *penance*, and of making satisfaction for them by a *penitential* life. And in like manner the more *humble* we are, the more we are also sensible of our own weakness; and of all the dangers that surround us on all sides, from the devil and the world, and most of all from our own passions, and that unhappy self-love, which is the root of all our evils: and thus the humble knowledge of ourselves, puts us upon keeping a greater guard upon ourselves, and a closer hand upon our passions, and disorderly inclinations,

clinations, in order to restrain all their irregularities, and bring them all under perfect subjection. Now this is *self-denial*; the business of which is to subdue *self-love*, and to force it to submit to the love of God. Thus all virtues depend upon humility. O lovely humility! O how blessed it is to be thus little in our own eyes! There is no other way to any degree of true greatness.

Conclude, if thou aspirest at perfection, to enter upon the path of humility; no other way can bring thee thither: if thou aim at arriving thither by any other road, thou wilt be sure to fall down some dreadful precipice,

AUG. 30. *On the degrees of humility.*

CONSIDER first, that true humility does not consist in speaking ill of ourselves, by saying we are great sinners, or the like; nor yet in the wearing plain apparel, or employing ourselves in mean offices; nor in looking down upon the ground, &c. we may do all this, and yet be far from being humble: because all this may be done out of pride, either to acquire the esteem of others by this outward shew of humility, or to please and applaud ourselves with the conceit of our being humble: true humility consists not in words, nor in the outside; but in the inward sentiments of the heart. Humility, says St. Bernard, is a virtue by which a man, out of a most true knowledge of himself, becomes mean and contemptible in his own eyes: so that for a man to be truly humble, is to have a low opinion of himself, through the deep sense he has of his own nothing, and his sins; and therefore to despise himself, and to be willing to be despised by all the world. See my soul if these be thy dispositions: if not, thou art not truly humble.

Consider 2dly, that the first degree of true humility, is that which is expressed in the definition, given by St. Bernard, viz. that we should have such a knowledge of ourselves, and of all our miseries, and sins; such a conviction of our having nothing at all to be proud of,
and

and very many things that make us wretchedly mean and contemptible; as sincerely to despise ourselves: seeing there is nothing in us of good, that is our own; and that whatsoever is in us of our own proper growth, or of our own stock, is all good for nothing, yea filthy and abominable. What room then can there be in us for any self-conceit, or self-esteem? How many and how pressing inducements have we, to oblige us to think meanly of ourselves, and to despise ourselves? And yet how much does this unhappy pride prevail, in spite of all these humiliations, which we carry about with us! Oh! let this misery of ours at least be a motive to despise ourselves the more!

Consider 3dly, that the second degree of true humility, advances us still farther, and makes us not only to despise ourselves, but to be willing, and even desirous, to be despised by all others: and that all others should have the same mean opinion of us, as we pretend to have of ourselves. And indeed since in all other things, we are ever willing to have others to be of the same opinion with ourselves, did we sincerely despise ourselves, we should certainly be glad that all others should have the same way of thinking as we have, and should in like manner despise us also. Alas! how far am I from these dispositions! The third and most sublime degree of humility is that of the Saints, who in the midst of the greatest favours, and highest elevations, and all the supernatural gifts of divine grace, are so established in God's truth, as to ascribe nothing at all to themselves, but all to God: and by how much the more they are exalted by him, are so much the more mean in their own eyes, by descending so much the deeper into the abyss of their own nothing. Happy they that in all things know how to distinguish what belongs to God, from that which belongs to themselves, and to reserve to themselves only that which is their own; and to give all the rest to God!

Conclude to aim at ascending from step to step, by the help of the knowledge of thyself; and not to rest till thou arrivest at the perfection of humility. She will bring

bring to thee all good things along with her; and conduct thee safe to the kingdom of God.

AUG. 31. *On the practice of humility.*

CONSIDER first, that in order to acquire this most necessary virtue of humility, we must have a greatest esteem of it; we must greatly desire it, and seek after it; we must earnestly pray for it, every day of our lives; and must neglect no opportunity of learning it, or improving ourselves in it, by the practice of it; that is, by daily exercising ourselves in the acts of it. Now as the *humiliations*, which come to us, either from the hand of God, or man, give us the best opportunity of practising, or exercising humility, we must learn to welcome these humiliations, and to embrace them in such manner, as to take occasion from them to humble ourselves daily both to God and man. For as we shall never learn patience without sufferings and crosses; so we shall never learn humility without *humiliations*. But as in the sufferings and crosses which come to us through the hands of wicked men, we must ever distinguish that which is the work and will of God, from that which is of the malice of man; so that we embrace the one, whilst we detest the other: so likewise in our humiliations, if they be attended with the evil of sin, either of our own, or of others, we must in such manner humble ourselves under them, as to embrace the abjection or humiliation, whilst we abhor the sin.

Consider 2dly, that in learning humility by practice, it will be proper to proceed gradually, by setting ourselves certain lessons, beginning with those that are more easy, and when these are learnt, proceeding to such as are more difficult. Thus for instance, let us begin by learning, 1. Not to seek, in any thing that we do, the praise, esteem, or applause of man; nor to say any word, tending directly, or indirectly, to our own praise or honour; but rather to mortify that inclination we have to be ever speaking of ourselves, and of our own performances. 2. Never to excuse, or palliate our own faults, or defects, nor to sling the blame upon
others

others. 3. Not to take pleasure in hearing ourselves praised, nor in our being honoured, or applauded by men: nor to be displeased at others being extolled, or preferred before us. 4. Carefully to shun all occasions of honour and praise; as far as we can, without being wanting to the duties of our calling. See my soul, how much work is here cut out for thee, and yet these are but the beginnings of the virtue of humility.

Consider 3dly, that to proceed in the practice of humility, we must not content ourselves, with the not seeking, nor desiring, nor taking any complacency in the praise, honour or esteem of others; but rather shunning and flying from it: but moreover we must put off all *self-esteem*, and learn to despise ourselves from our hearts; and not to leave off, till according to the gospel lesson, we can, with all simplicity and sincerity, *sit down in the lowest place*; by giving the preference, in our own esteem, to all others before ourselves; and thinking ourselves the worst of all. Then as to the sentiments of others in our regard, and their treatment of us; we are to proceed in the study and practice of humility, by these three steps. 1. We are to learn to suffer with meekness and patience, our being despised, reproached, or affronted by others. 2. We are to learn to receive this kind of treatment, with a willingness and readiness of mind; and to be pleased with our being slighted and contemned. 3. We must even learn to embrace all these kinds of humiliations with joy: and not to stop, till with the Apostle, we not only are dead to the world, and to all it can say, either for us, or against us; but are even glad, that we should be crucified to the world, and the world to us,

Conclude to continue, by a diligent application, both the study and practice of these great lessons, till thou become perfect in them all; and go through the whole course of this heavenly science, the science of the Saints.

SEPT.

SEPTEMBER 1. *On the eight Beatitudes, St. Matt. v.*

CONSIDER first, how the Son of God, the eternal wisdom of the Father, being come down from heaven to be our father, our light, and our guide; in order to reclaim us from all our errors, to dispel our darkness, to redress all our evils, and to conduct us into the way of true and everlasting happiness; opened his heavenly school for these purposes, by his divine sermon upon the mount; in the beginning of which he has laid down in a few words, the principal maxims of true wisdom, and all the fundamentals of Christian morality, comprized in what we commonly call the *eight beatitudes*. Christians, we all desire to be happy for ever: and behold here the wisdom of God, which can neither deceive, nor be deceived; declares to us in clear and distinct terms, what it is that is to make us happy here, and to conduct us safe to a happiness that will never end. O let us embrace then these blessed lessons! Who would not study them well, since the learning them is to make us wise indeed; and to bring us infallibly to the very source of all wisdom and happiness; even to an eternal union with God himself? O heavenly master, who would not frequent thy divine school, since in the very first entrance into it, thou thus directest us, into a plain and easy way to eternal bliss?

Consider 2dly, that the ancient philosophers, with all their pretensions to wisdom, were strangely in the dark, with regard to man's true happiness, his last end, and his sovereign good; about which they ran into many errors; and not one of them all ever came near the truth. And as they knew not the end; so were they also strangers to the true means that were to bring us to this end. They never once imagined, that, to be *poor in spirit*, to be *meek*, to *mourn*, to *suffer persecution*, &c. was the way to happiness: much less did they suspect that such as these alone were actually happy. This was a doctrine never heard of in their

schools. This was a lesson that was to be taught by the Son of God. This truth he brought down with him from heaven, and delivered to his disciples, in his first divine sermon. O my soul, let us embrace, with all our affections, these divine truths, taught us by so great a master, let us be practically convinced of them, and conform ourselves to them in the whole conduct of our lives.

Consider 3dly, how miserable are all the children of Babylon, that is, all poor deluded worldlings, who under the name of Christians, whilst they profess themselves followers, and disciples of this divine master, take no notice of these lessons which he came from heaven to teach: but live on in an affected ignorance of them; so as to apprehend all those to be miserable, whom he pronounces *blessed*; and those alone to be happy, who wallow in riches and sensual pleasures; whom he declares to be miserable; and against whom he pronounces his *woe*. And do such people as these believe the gospel indeed? whilst they pretend to seek for happiness, in the very way, which (if the gospel be true) must needs betray them into many errors, labours, and sorrows here; and shortly conduct them into endless misery. O let us at least be more wise! Let us open our eyes to this great light, which is come down from heaven, to shine upon them that before sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Let us believe and adhere to this great teacher, who *has the words of eternal life*. Let us follow him, and we shall not fail, under his conduct, to find the true way to solid happiness, and eternal life.

Conclude to be ever thankful to the Son of God, for all these great gospel truths, which he has brought us down from heaven; in order to set loose our souls from the earth, and so to carry us up to heaven. O! if we desire to fly up to this happy region of pure and immortal joys, it must be with the wings of these virtues, that are recommended to us in these eight beatitudes.

SEPT. 2. *On poverty of spirit.*

CONSIDER first, that the first of the eight beatitudes is expressed in these words: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. v. 2. This beatitude, or happiness, which brings with it a title to the kingdom of heaven, belongs in the first place, to them that are *poor by condition*, and in effect, *Luke vi. 20.* provided they be contented with their poverty, and cordially embrace it, as the beloved companion and favourite of Christ and his Saints. The Son of God came down from heaven to seek poverty upon earth: he was born in poverty; he lived in poverty; and he died in poverty: and shall we, my soul, disdain; shall we fly and abhor, what the wisdom of God made choice of for him and his? Especially since he has declared, that to be poor here is the true way to be rich hereafter; and that the men of riches, *who have their consolation here*, after they have slept out their short sleep, shall find their hands empty: whilst the poor after their short sufferings shall be admitted to the immense treasures of a happy eternity.

Consider 2dly, that this beatitude belongs in the second place to them that are *poor in affection*; that is, who set not their heart on their worldly wealth, but are in readiness of mind to part with their riches, whenever God shall call for all, or any part of them; and in effect willingly resign them up, when he by any occasion is pleased to take them away. As also to all such as are poor by choice, for the love of Christ; who, when they understand such to be the will of God, actually relinquish all they have to follow him. In fine, to all such as have their affection disengaged from all perishable things; from all worldly honours, possessions and pleasures; from all that is earthly and temporal; in a word, from all that is not God: for such as these, and only such as these, are in a proper disposition to fly up to the kingdom of heaven. There is no flying thither, as long as we are tied down by affection to any thing upon earth. *O who will give*

me the wings of the dove, that is of simplicity, and purity, in all my intentions and affections, that being let loose from this wretched earth, by this true poverty of spirit, I may fly up, freely to my God, and eternally repose in him!

Consider 3dly, that this beatitude belongs in a particular manner to the *humble*: for such as they are truly *poor in spirit*; for as much as they have not their *spirit* puffed up with windy *pride*, nor with any conceit of any ability of their own; like him to whom it is said, Apoc. iii. 27. *Thou sayst! I am rich and made wealthy, and I have need of nothing: and thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*: nor are they *high-spirited* or *high-minded*; which is being *rich in spirit*: but are poor, mean, little in their own eyes; and therefore exalted by God; who to such little ones as these gives his grace in this world, and his heavenly kingdom in the next. O teach us, dear Lord, to be thus poor in spirit: teach us to be little and humble.

Conclude to begin thy study of true wisdom, by applying thyself to learn well this first lesson of *poverty in spirit*: especially since thy great master expects, and requires of all his disciples, that they should enter into his school, with a disengagement, of their heart and affection at least, from every thing else: that they should leave all to follow him.

SEPT. 3. *On meekness.*

CONSIDER first, that after *poverty of spirit*, in the next place *meekness* is recommended to us, as the true road to everlasting happiness: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* These two virtues of *poverty of spirit*, and *meekness*, are nearly allied to each other, they go hand in hand. Our Lord joins them both together, and expects we should learn them both from him, *Matt. xi.* when he calls upon us all, *to take up his yoke upon us, and to learn of him because he is meek and humble of heart.* But what will he give us, do you think, if we learn to imitate his meekness? O! he assures

assures us, that we shall find in the exercise of this virtue, *refreshment, rest, and peace* for our souls here; and shall inherit *the land* of the living hereafter. Happy portion of meek souls, even the possession of the Lord of life himself, in *the land of the living*! Christians, who would not embrace this lovely virtue, which brings with it a calm serenity, and tranquillity of soul, even during our pilgrimage through this region of the dying; and secures to us, in our true country, the eternal repose and life of the Saints!

Consider 2dly, what this *meekness* is, which is entitled to this beatitude. *Meekness* is a virtue, which restrains all anger and passion; which suppresses the swelling of the heart, under real or imaginary provocations or injuries; which stills the tumults of the soul on all these occasions; keeps in all heat, or violence of words; and allows no thoughts to the soul of any other, than that truly Christian revenge, of *over-coming evil with good*. Such was the practice of the *Lamb of God*, both in life and death; of whom it was written, *Isai. xlii. and Matt. xii. He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets: the bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish, &c. He shall not be sad nor troublesome, &c.* And *1 Pet. ii. 23. When he was reviled he did not revile, when he suffered, he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly.* Now it is this meekness, this sweet, mild, gentle behaviour, this evenness of soul; joined with courtesy in words; and affability, to the little, and to the poor, as much as to the great, and to the rich; when joined with true humility of heart, makes up the proper and distinctive livery, of the true servants, and followers of Jesus Christ; which if we do not all endeavour to put on, he will not own us for his. It was this made up the amiable character of the primitive Christians. The sweet odour of these truly Christian virtues attracted thousands in those days to the faith of Jesus Christ; and will be found at all times more effectual in order to the conversion of souls, than the strongest arguments, or even miracles,

if not recommended by meekness and humility. O let us embrace these lovely virtues! *My son, says the Spirit of God, do thy works in meekness: and thou shalt be beloved above the glory of men,* Ecclus. iii. 19.

Consider 3dly, what we must do, that we may effectually learn to be meek; and may obtain a compleat victory, over anger and passion, and all that train of evils, which are the usual attendants, or consequences of anger and passion. First, we must *watch*. 2dly, we must *pray*. 3dly, we must *fight*. We must *watch* over our own hearts; that we may not be surprized by the sudden motions of anger, and hurried away before we are aware: we must forecast the occasions, in which we may meet with temptations, or provocations; that we may be prepared for them, and armed against them. We must upon all occasions, *pray* with all the fervour of our souls, for the divine assistance, against so dangerous an evil, as passion; as being a capital enemy of charity, the queen of virtues: we must often lament our misery in this kind, at the feet of the Lamb of God; and sue for redress, by the intercession of the blessed Virgin, and of all the Saints: we must for this purpose frequent the sacraments, the sources of heavenly grace. We must *fight*, by diligently suppressing the first motions of wrath: we must be convinced that no man upon earth, nor all the men upon earth, no nor all the devils in hell, with all their malice, can do us half so much harm as we do ourselves by venting our passion, and seeking revenge: and therefore we must resolve to *fight* till death, with the best arms we are able, against this wicked passion, as an enemy, which is continually seeking to betray our souls to Satan.

Conclude to spare no pains, that thou mayest effectually learn of Jesus Christ, to be meek and humble of heart: there is no other way to peace here, nor to heaven hereafter.

SEPT. 4. *On mourning.*

CONSIDER first, those words of our Lord, in the third beatitude: *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* And reflect, how widely distant are all the maxims and notions of worldlings with relation to a happy life, from the doctrine of this beatitude; which yet is the doctrine of Truth. The children of this world imagine, that mirth, and jollity, and pastimes, and worldly pleasures are the chief ingredients of a happy life; and that such as laugh now are much more happy than such as weep and mourn. But they are certainly deceived: for he who cannot err, has pronounced a *woe*, (implying the worst of miseries) against *them that laugh now, for they shall mourn*, saith he, *and weep*, Luke vi. 25: whilst on the other hand he has declared them happy, that now *weep and mourn*. And his holy Spirit long before has told us, by the wisest of men, Eccl. ii. 2. *Laughter I have counted error, and to mirth I have said, why art thou vainly deceived?* And again Eccl. vii. 5. *The heart of the wise is where there is mourning, and the heart of fools where there is mirth.* O let us then *mourn* with the wise and with the Saints, that we may rejoice with them for ever.

Consider 2dly, what kind of *mourning* is here recommended in this beatitude. Not worldly sadness, of which it is written, Eccles. xxx. 25. *Sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it:* and 2 Cor. vii. 10. *The sorrow of the world worketh death.* Not a fullen melancholy, or any such mourning, as is turbulent, or accompanied with impatient wishes for death, or anxious solitudes, or despondency: but a more calm and peaceful *mourning*, viz. of *compunction* for our sins, daily bewailing them in the sight of God, and doing penance for them; of *compassion* for our neighbours, lamenting their miseries, and the dismal havock that sin is continually making amongst souls; of *condolence* with Jesus Christ, for the outrages he daily receives from impenitent sinners, who are continually crucifying him
by

by their wicked lives: in fine of *devotion*; in consideration of our long and wretched banishment; our great distance from our true country, in the midst of wars and dangers; and no security, but in continual watching, praying and labouring to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; of our absence from God, our sovereign good, who alone can satisfy our souls; and therefore daily mourning for the length of our sojourning in this Babylon, with longing desires after our heavenly Sion, Happy they who are always mourning in this manner!

Consider godly, what the reward is, that is here promised to them that mourn: *They shall be comforted*; saith the Lord. Yea; they shall be comforted, even in this life, with the sweet visitations and graces of the Spirit of God, the true Comforter of souls; with the satisfaction and peace of a good conscience; and with the experience of the inconceivable sweetness, that is found in the love of God; one hour of which is capable of affording more solid pleasure and delight to the soul than many years of worldly enjoyments. And in the life to come, they shall be comforted without measure or end; where they shall be eternally inebriated with the plenty of God's house, and shall be made to drink of the torrent of his pleasure: at the very head of the fountain of life, Pl. xxxv. 9, 10. the streams of which afford immortal joys to the whole city of God above. O when shall we, my soul, be so happy as to drink at this fountain!

Conclude to make it thy choice to *mourn* now, that thou mayest rejoice for ever. Remember, that *they that sow in tears shall reap in joy*, Pl. cxxxv. 5. As on the other side the children of the Babylon of this world, who seek their delight and comfort here, must expect hereafter to fall under that sentence of Babylon, pronounced Apocal. xviii. 7. *As much as she hath glorified herself and hath been in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her.*

SEPT. 5. *On hungering and thirsting after justice.*

CONSIDER first, the words of the fourth beatitude: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.* O happy hunger and thirst, which brings the soul to the possession of all true justice, virtue and perfection, and to a blessed union with the very fountain of justice, which is God himself! Reflect my soul, how the desire to be good is indeed the beginning of all good: the desire of wisdom, according to the scripture, is the beginning of wisdom: the desire of the love of God, is the beginning of the love of God: and so of all other virtues. But then this desire must not be a half desire, like that of the sluggard, of whom the wise man says, that *he will: and he will not*, Prov. xiii. 4: but a full and earnest desire. And when this desire is strong and perseverant, when it grows to be a vehement *hunger and thirst* after divine love, and after all true justice and Christian perfection; it then sets the soul upon seeking diligently, praying heartily, knocking earnestly at the gate of the divine mercy, and employing all possible means, to procure the satisfying this hunger and thirst: and thus it easily overcomes all obstacles; and never leaves off its pursuit, till it has obtained what it so earnestly seeks and desires. O happy souls that hunger and thirst in this manner!

Consider 2dly, more in particular, what it is we are to *hunger and thirst after*, in order to be entitled to this beatitude? The justice of God in ourselves: the justice of God in our neighbours: the justice of God in himself. We *hunger and thirst after* the justice of God in ourselves: when we earnestly seek and desire that we ourselves may, by the grace of God, *fulfil all justice*; that we may acquit ourselves of every branch of our duty; and that the love of God may take full possession of our souls, both for time and eternity. We *hunger and thirst after* the justice of God in our neighbours; when we earnestly desire, and, as much as lies in us, seek and procure, that all others may know, love,
and

love, and serve God, and be eternally his. We *hunger and thirst after the justice of God*, in himself; when we are in love with his own infinite goodness, as it is in itself; with the beauty of his divine attributes: with his *greater glory* in all things; and with the perfect accomplishment of his holy will. Such was the *hunger and thirst after justice*, that our Lord himself had here upon earth, who says of himself, St. John iv. 34. *my meat is to do the will of him that sent me*. My soul, have we any share in this *blessed hunger and thirst*? Or do we not rather loathe this heavenly food; and thirst for muddy waters, drawn out of broken cisterns, which can never satisfy us?

Consider godly, the reward here promised to them that *hunger and thirst after justice*: *they shall have their fill*, saith the Lord: *their fill* here, of divine grace, of true devotion, of heavenly charity, of all Christian virtues, of a store of good works and merit, of all the gifts, and the fruits of the Holy Ghost; in a word of that *justice*, which *they hunger and thirst after*: and hereafter they shall be still more happily *filled*, with the beatifick vision, and the eternal enjoyment of God himself, the only true and sovereign Good, which alone can satisfy the heart of man: according to that of the psalmist, Ps. xvi. 15. *I shall be satiated, when thy glory shall appear*. Here they shall be *filled* with the grace of God, raining down upon them from the great ocean above: hereafter they shall be drowned in that immense ocean of the Deity; where they shall be brim-full of God, for all eternity.

Conclude to direct thy appetite towards *the good things of the Lord, in the land of the living*: and in the mean time towards *the fulfilling all his justice*. But O! take care it be not depraved with the false sweets of worldly, sensual and carnal pleasures! These will take away from thee all relish for the things of God: they will neither fill thee, or satisfy thee, themselves; nor suffer thee to *taste* either in time, or eternity, *how sweet is the Lord*.

SEPTEMBER 6. *On being merciful.*

CONSIDER first, the words of the fifth beatitude: *blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy:* and reflect on the necessity we continually lie under of the mercy of God; and how easy a means our Lord has here furnished us with for obtaining this mercy. All our good must come from God: and as we have rendered ourselves absolutely unworthy of any good at all by our sins; we can alledge nothing for ourselves; but, can only appeal to the divine mercy, that he may give us the graces we have not deserved; and forgive us the punishments we have deserved; and the sins, by which we have deserved them. So that the finding mercy with God is all in all; and the means of finding this mercy is to shew mercy to one another. *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you, Luke vi. 37, 38.* O how lovely; how beautiful; how beneficial both for time and eternity, is this virtue of mercy! How sweet are all her fruits! She is the favourite of heaven, and makes all her lovers favourites of heaven: she is the eldest daughter of the great King, (whose mercy distinguishes itself; and shines most brightly over all his works): she shews herself to all that seek her, she runs to the embraces of all that are in love with her; she carries them home with her to her Father's house: even to the sacred mansions of a happy eternity.

Consider 2dly, the divers ways of shewing mercy, that are recommended to us by the word of God. Such are 1st the *works of mercy corporal*, by alms-deeds; by feeding and cloathing any of the poor members of Jesus Christ; by visiting and relieving the sick, or imprisoned, &c. Such works as these, according to the scripture, Tob. xii. 9. *deliver from death, they purge away sins, and make us find mercy and life everlasting.* Such works as these entitle us to an eternal Kingdom. Matt. xxv. 34, 35. 2dly, The *works of mercy spiritual*, by assisting, or relieving our neighbours, in their spiritual necessities; by giving them good counsel, or instruction; by comforting them under their afflictions; by encouraging

raging them in temptations; but especially by reclaiming them from their errors and vices, and by that means delivering their souls from the second and everlasting death; and putting them in the right way of coming to live for ever, with the ever living God. O how acceptable to God; how precious in his sight are these spiritual works of mercy! The Son of God came down from heaven to exercise these kinds of works upon earth: in these he employed the days of his mortal life. O let us be glad to follow his great example, as far as our weakness will allow us!

Consider 3dly, the reward that is here promised to the *merciful*, viz. that *they shall obtain mercy*: and that both here: as well temporally, as spiritually; by having their own wants redressed, and their sins forgiven them; and hereafter, by their being *received into everlasting dwellings*, by those, to whom they had here shewn mercy; and finding there the fruit of all the seed of the works of mercy, they had here sown, multiplied to a hundred fold. Alas! how wretched shall the best of us be, if God does not shew us *mercy*! For who can stand the judgment of God, if his *mercy* be set aside? How happy then are they, who by being *merciful* to one another, ensure to themselves the *mercy* of God to stand by them in the time of need! But on the other hand, how unhappy are they, who refuse to shew mercy to their neighbours! For *judgment without mercy to them that have not done mercy*, saith St. James ii. 13.

Conclude to be ever merciful to thy neighbours, that thou mayest find mercy with God. For *with the same measure you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again*, Luke vi. 38, Yea with infinite advantage, according to that of the same Gospel; *good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom*. Ibidem,

SEPT. 7. *On cleanness of heart.*

CONSIDER first, the words of the sixth beatitude, *Blessed are the clean of heart. for they shall see God.* God is not to be seen by the eyes of the body, but only by the eyes of the heart, that is, by the interior eyes of the soul. Now as the bodily eyes, in order to contemplate their proper objects, must be *clean*, (for if any speck interpose itself, and cover the sight, the object cannot be seen): so the interior eye of the soul, in order to see God, must be *clean*; the sight must not be covered with any speck of earthly dirt, that is, with any disorderly affection to any thing in this world. This *cleanness* of the inward eye, requires two things: viz. *simplicity* in the intention, *purity* in the affection: with these two wings, a man is lifted up above the things of the earth: *simplicity* aims at God alone; *purity* takes hold of him, embraces him, and adheres to him. *Seek God*, says the wise man, in *simplicity of heart*: Wisd. i. 1. that is, in the uprightness, and sincerity of a *single heart*; of a heart free from all double dealing, and all the guile of an artful self-seeking, instead of seeking God. Let the *eye* of the intention be *simple*, that is *single* and sincere, and truly directed to God; and then the *whole body* of the actions shall be *lightsome*, Matt. vi. 22. Let God be the great object of thy love; so as to admit of no affection, that takes off thy heart from him: and thy heart will be truly *pure* and *clean*; and qualified to contemplate and embrace God.

Consider 2dly, the degrees, by which we are to ascend to this perfect *purity* and *cleanness* of heart. The first, and most necessary *purgation*, is from all mortal sin, and from the affections to it. For the heart, that voluntarily admits of the affections to mortal sin (whether it be the sin of impurity, or any other vice) is absolutely *unclean*, and is possessed by an *unclean* spirit, and therefore can have no share in God. The second *purgation* goes farther, and not only settles the soul in a fixed determination, never to consent, upon any

account, not even in thought, to any one mortal sin; but also cleanses the heart from all wilful affection to venial sin; and fixes her in a resolution, never, with full deliberation, to commit a known venial sin; much less to indulge any habit or custom of any such sins. All these sins, when fully deliberate, are so many spots and stains, which strangely disfigure the beauty of the soul; make her unworthy of the embraces of her heavenly spouse; and darken the eye of the heart, so as to disqualify it for the seeing of God. And therefore such spots and stains as these must be purged away, if we would be truly *clean of heart*.

Consider 3dly, that in order to be perfectly *clean of heart*, the heart must also be *purged* from all affections to worldly honours, riches, and pleasures; from all disorderly love of the creature, to the prejudice of the love of the Creator; and from every affection, that takes off any part of the heart from God: which indeed is always the case, when we love any person or thing, which we do not love for God's sake, or with a due subordination to the love of God. Whatsoever love cannot stand this test, is more or less an *unclean* love; it divides the heart; it makes the heart *unclean*; it sullies its purity; and disqualifies it for the seeing of God. O see then my soul what an evil it is, to suffer any irregular affection to possess thy heart; since it hinders thee from so great a good, even the sight of God, the only true and sovereign good!

Conclude to be ever jealous of the purity of thy heart: labour daily to purge it more and more, not only from all wilful sin, but also from every earthly affection, that can any ways sully it, or overcloud its inward sight, with the exhalations, that are always arising from sensual and worldly love.

SEPT. 8. *On the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.*

CONSIDER first, that on this day the Church devoutly celebrates the birth day of the great Queen, that brought forth to us the King of heaven, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the source of all
our

our good. This birth of hers was like the first dawning of that happy day, which the Son of God, the true *sun of justice*, brought us from heaven; in the light of which if we duly walk, during our mortal pilgrimage, we shall come securely to that blessed day, which knows no night. On this festival of the Blessed Virgin, mother of God, we ought, in the first place, to praise and bless God, and to give him thanks for all his graces bestowed upon her; by which he prepared her soul and body, from her very conception, to be a worthy dwelling for his Son, holy and without spot or blemish. 2dly, To honour him, in this blessed Virgin; and to rejoice in all the wonders of his power, goodness and mercy, by which he paved the way for our redemption. 3dly, To shew a true and solid devotion to our blessed Lady, by an earnest application to her for her prayers and intercession, and a zealous imitation of her virtues.

Consider 2dly, the grounds which all good Christians have, and always had, to be devout to the blessed Virgin: as we find in every age, the more eminent any persons have been in the love of Jesus Christ, the more devoted they have also been to his blessed mother: verifying, by their practice in this regard, that prophesy of hers, St. Luke i. that *all generations should call her blessed*. These grounds may be reduced to three heads: her *dignity*, her *sanctity*, and her *elevation in glory*.

1. Her *supereminent dignity of mother of God*; the nearest *alliance*, which any pure creature can have with him. And how can we love him, and not love his mother? 2. Her *supereminent sanctity*, for she was *full of divine grace*, even before she conceived, St. Luke i. 26. how much more after carrying in her womb, for nine months, the source of all grace and sanctity? And what shall we say of the thirty years, she had him always before her eyes, and still more in her heart; and of all the remaining space of her life; during which she was continually growing in grace: God on his part never ceasing to bestow with a most bountiful hand; and she on her part never receiving his grace in vain,

but ever corresponding and co-operating with it; and by this means continually drawing down new blessings?
 3. Her supereminent *elevation*, in the *eternal glory* of heaven, in proportion to the supereminent *grace* and *sanctity*, to which she arrived here upon earth, (as the one is always the measure of the other); and the *interest* she has with her divine Son, in consequence thereof. See my soul how many, and how pressing motives thou hast to be devout to this blessed Lady.

Consider 3dly, that as God is the sole author, and the original source of all the dignity, sanctity, and glory, which we honour in the blessed Virgin; so all that veneration, which the Catholick church pays to this blessed Lady, has God both for its beginning, and its end. Our devotion to her proceeds from the love we bear her Son: we honour in her his gifts and graces: we love and honour her for his sake: and all the extraordinary respect we at any time shew to her, we refer to his greater glory. So far then from robbing God of any part of his honour, by the veneration we give her, we honour him indeed so much the more, because all this our devotion finally tends to him, and terminates in him. And thus we always find that such as are truly devout to the blessed Virgin, fail not to be also true lovers of God, and *pursuers of all good works*.

Conclude to embrace this devotion to our blessed Lady, as an excellent means to advance thee in all good: but do not imagine thyself to be truly devout to her, if thou art no ways solicitous to imitate her virtues. True devotion loves, esteems, and honours in her, that which God loves, esteems, and honours, viz. her virtues and sanctity. And how can we better shew our love, esteem and honour for virtue and sanctity, than by labouring to imitate it?

SEPT. 9. *On being peace makers.*

CONSIDER first, the words of the seventh *beatitude*: *Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God.* God's own abode is in *eternal peace*: and the heavenly *Jerusalem* is the *vision*,
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and enjoyment of an undisturbed everlasting *peace*. They therefore that truly love *peace*; and as much as lies in them, both keep it in themselves, and with all others; and contribute all they can to make peace among such as are at variance with one another; and to bring all their neighbours to be at peace with God: are entitled to this beatitude, and to the glorious character of *children of God*. O how amiable is the spirit of peace! How blessed are its fruits! It is the paradise of the soul: it makes a kind of a heaven upon earth. O may this *peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep both our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord, Philip. iii. 7.*

Consider 2dly, the different ways there are of being *peace makers*, with relation to our neighbours, with relation to ourselves, and with relation to God. It is a blessed thing to bring our neighbours to *peace*, and mutual charity: as it is an abomination in the sight of God, to *sow discord among brethren*, Prov. vi. 19. It is a more blessed thing to make *peace* at home in our own souls, by suppressing the rebellious disorders of our passions, by bringing the flesh under subjection to the spirit, the inferior part of the soul to the superior, and the superior to God. It is the most blessed thing of all to bring both ourselves, and as many others as we can to a constant and perfect *peace* with God; that he may reign without controul in all our souls; that his kingdom may be perfectly established within us; that his holy will, his holy law, his grace, and his peace may live in us and with us for ever. O happy peace indeed that unites us here to God by grace, and hereafter in eternal glory!

Consider 3dly, the reward promised in this beatitude to the *peace makers*: *they shall be called the children of God*. O reflect, my soul, what a dignity it is, to be children of so great a King; even the King that made heaven and earth. Behold what manner of charity, saith St. John (1 John iii. 1.) *the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called and should be the sons of God. Sons of God even now* by his grace, bearing a resemblance

blance with his true Son, (who is stiled in scripture *the prince of peace*) and as such in a particular manner loved cherished, and protected by him here as a Parent: and hereafter to be admitted to a more perfect likeness, union, and as it were transformation into him, according to that of the same Apostle, v. 2. *Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like unto him: because we shall see him as he is.* O Christians, what blessings both for time and eternity are prepared for the lovers and promoters of peace!

Conclude, my soul, to endeavour to be always a friend, and a *child of peace*, and *the peace of God will always rest upon thee.* Luke x. 6. and never leave thee till it bring thee to thee region of everlasting peace.

SEPTEMBER 10. *On the means of preserving and maintaining the peace of the soul.*

CONSIDER first, that it is of great advantage to the soul, both in order to defend her from all evil, and to advance her in all good, to keep herself always in *peace*, within her own interior: because this inward *peace*, when it is *true*, brings along with it courage, strength and grace, by the favours which God, always shews to the truly *peaceable*. Now the first, and most necessary means, for acquiring, or preserving this peace in the soul, must be to banish, all wilful sin from the soul; for there can be no *true peace* where wilful sin resides. For no one can be at war with God, and have any peace within himself: except it be that *false peace*, which is sometimes formed by an erroneous conscience, that shuts its eyes against God's light, that it may not be obliged to embrace his truth. O dear Jesus, never let me be so miserable as to be deluded by any such *false peace*, or ever to be a rebel to thy light!

Consider 2dly, that the true peace of the soul is not to be acquired, without subduing the passions, and
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keeping them in order. For what peace can there be in the midst of daily storms, tumults, and rebellions; such as are raised by headstrong and untamed passions? What peace can there be for the slaves of pride and ambition, of avarice, and worldly solicitude, of wrath and envy, &c? Alas all these and the like passions disturb and disquiet the soul, they put her in a ferment, they suffer her not to find any solid rest, or tranquillity; or any manner of share in that calmness, and evenness of soul, which those enjoy, who are perfectly masters of themselves, by the victory they have acquired over all their passions. O how true it is, that our peace and happiness, even here, is not to be found by yielding to our disorderly inclinations, but by mortifying and overcoming them!

Consider 3dly, that the way to acquire true peace, and true liberty of soul, is thus marked out by a servant of God (following of Christ, *L. 3. Ch. 23.*) 'Endeavour, my, Son, rather to do the will of another than thy own: ever chuse rather to have less than more: always seek the lowest place, and to be inferiour to every one: always wish and pray that the will of God may be entirely fulfilled in thee. Behold such a man as this enters upon the coast of peace and rest.' Whosoever will but observe these rules will not easily be disquieted, but rather will meet with a paradise of delights in his soul. And we shall find upon examination, that whenever we are disturbed, it is because we have transgressed some or other of these rules: either by being too much bent upon our own will; or by the desires of having more, or of being higher; or at least by not being entirely resigned to the will of God:

Conclude to set out in quest of this happy way, that leads to true peace, by giving up thy own desires, and ever embracing the holy will of God.

SEPTEMBER 11. *On suffering persecution for justice sake.*

CONSIDER first, these words of the eighth beatitude. *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice*

*justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And again. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. O how opposite is this gospel doctrine to all the sentiments of flesh and blood! Alas, we have naturally so little relish for such sufferings as these, that we are apt to pity all those, and look upon them as unhappy and miserable, who are exposed to such kind of evils; and so far from rejoicing, when it is our own case, we are too often dejected and sorrowful. But surely we are in the wrong: since truth itself that cannot be deceived, not only assures us, that these sufferings are the way to be *blessed*, that is, to be *happy* hereafter; but that even now, whilst we are actually suffering, we are in very deed happy and *blessed*; and therefore he calls upon us to be glad and rejoice under the experience of these reputed evils, as being indeed real goods in our regard, by the manifold fruits they produce. Both in time and eternity.*

Consider 2dly, what these fruits are, that proceed from suffering for Christ's sake, and for his justice. They are fruits of grace here, and of glory hereafter. These kind of sufferings wean the soul from the love of this world, and of all its empty toys, and short-lived enjoyments; and give her a longing desire after her true home, the happy region of truth, and of life; the sight and enjoyment of her sovereign good. These sufferings entitle the soul to the sweet consolations of the Holy Ghost, which are usually bestowed more abundantly, in proportion to the greatness of the suffering; according to that of the psalmist (Ps. xciii. 29.) *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul.* These sufferings give the soul a relish for the cross, and a new kind of love for her crucified Saviour. These sufferings teach her humility, meekness, patience, conformity to the will of God, with all the other lessons, that are to be learnt in the school of the cross; besides the happy opportunity they afford

afford the soul, of discharging the debt of punishment due for former sins, by offering up to God, and bearing in a Christian manner, these present afflictions.

Consider 3dly, that the principal fruits of these sufferings are reserved, to be gathered in another life: according to that of the Apostle, Rom. viii. 17, 18. *If we suffer with Christ we shall be glorified with him: For the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.* And again, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.* O look forward my soul into this immense eternity, and contemplate the infinite rewards, that are there laid up, to recompense our little sufferings here; and learn to *to be glad and rejoice*, in the experience of these small temporal afflictions; because these put thee in the true way to joys, that will never end: and the greater thy sufferings are here, the greater will be these joys hereafter.

Conclude not to pretend to a life without sufferings, if thou hopest to live for ever with God: but then take care, not to draw down these sufferings upon thy head, by any crime: For this would not be *suffering*, for *justice sake*, Give ear to St. Peter. (1 Pet. iv. 15, 16. *Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other mens things. But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name.*

SEPTEMBER 12. *On the virtue of patience.*

CONSIDER first, that *patience* is a virtue, by which we bear up with courage and constancy under a variety of evils, to which we are continually exposed in this mortal life: such as, afflictions, exteriour, or interiour, sicknesses, pains of body, or mind, losses, disappointments, want, affronts, injuries, and other crosses of divers kinds, which more or less are incident to men, in every station of life, and in every part of life, from the king to the beggar, and from our childhood to our decrepit

decrepit age. Now under all these evils, the good Christian is supported by the virtue of *patience*, in such manner as neither to be over much dejected, or cast down by any cross accidents, or sufferings; nor upon these occasions to be put out of the road of virtue, or hindered from the love and service of God; but so as still to go on with courage, in his way to heaven, carrying his cross after his Redeemer, without murmuring or repining. O my soul, how lovely is this Christian patience! It has even the admirable property of turning all the evils of life, into so many great and solid goods, by making them all serviceable to eternity: and in the mean time it makes them both light and easy; and sweetens all that is bitter in them, by seasoning them with the consideration of the holy will of God.

Consider edly, how much this virtue of *patience* is recommended to us, by the great example of the Son of God; who as he was never free from sufferings in any part of his life, so he both lived and died in the exercise of *patience*; and by his *patience* redeemed the world. Then all the Saints and martyrs, as they had their share in drinking of his cup of sufferings, so they have all run by *patience* to the fight set before them: looking on Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him endured the cross, Heb. xii. 1, 2. They all in life possessed their souls in their *patience*, Luke xxi. 19, they all in death saved their souls by *patience*. *Patience* hath a perfect work, saith St. James i. 4. that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing. He that is patient, saith the wise man, Prov. xiv. 29. is governed with much wisdom. And again Prov. xvi. 32, The patient man is better than the valiant, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh cities. *Patience* then is the virtue of the martyrs, and of all the Saints; *patience* made them martyrs and Saints; *patience* made them truly wise; *patience* gave them the victory over all their enemies; in their *patience* they brought forth much fruit; *patience* made them perfect; *patience* brought them to that incorruptible crown, which is given to none but those who by *patience* have lawfully strove for it, and won

won it. O blessed patience! Let me be so happy as to find thee, and embrace thee: let me live and die in thy company!

Consider 3dly, the absolute necessity of *patience* in order to our serving God here, and saving our souls souls hereafter. *Patience is necessary for you*, saith the Apostle, Heb. x. 36. *that doing the will of God you may receive the promise*. For our life is a warfare upon earth: and in every part of life we must expect to meet with trials, conflicts, and sufferings. Now *patience* turns all these to our good: but where *patience* is wanting, all goes wrong; we sin at every step; we cowardly give up the cause of God, and our souls, upon every slight occasion; we withdraw ourselves from the service, which we were happily engaged in; we run from our colours, we fall a prey to the enemy. O it is true, that as there is no going to heaven but *through many tribulations* Acts xiv. 21. so there is no securing to ourselves that blessed kingdom, but by much patience.

Conclude to give ear again to the admonitions of the Spirit of God. Eccclus, ii. *Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice, and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation. Humble thy heart, and endure—wait on God with patience: join thyself to God, and endure—take all that shall be brought upon thee, and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience: for gold and silver are tried in the fire: but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation. Happy they who practise these lessons!*

SEPTEMBER 13. *On the means of acquiring patience.*

CONSIDER first, that *patience*, like all other good things, is to be acquired, by desiring, by seeking, by praying for it: but, by desiring it earnestly, by seeking it diligently, by praying for it fervently. *If any one want this true wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all abundantly—and it shall be given him: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering*, St. James i. 5, 6. But how shall we heartily desire, seek, or pray, for that, which we have little or no esteem for?

Wherefore

Wherefore the first step towards acquiring patience, is to study to know its true value, and the great treasures it brings along with it to the soul, which is so happy as to find it. Now this knowledge must come by consideration, and meditation on the manifold fruits it produces, both for this world and the next; here a complete victory over all our enemies, peace of soul, true liberty, and dominion over our passions, with an abundance of other graces; and hereafter all those sublime rewards, that are promised to the conquerors. Apocal. ii. and iii. *To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, that is in the paradise of my God.* Apoc. ii. 7. *He that shall overcome, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more, and I will write upon him the name of my God, &c.* Apoc. iii. 12. *And to him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne, &c.* verse 21.

Consider 2dly, that in order to acquire patience, it will be of great service to us in all our afflictions, pains, or other sufferings, to reflect on these three points: first, upon what we have deserved by our sins; and how very little what we suffer is, in comparison with what we ought to suffer, if we had our deserts: 2dly, upon the sufferings, the Son of God endured for our sins, out of pure love of us; and the patience with which he endured them: 3dly, on the holy will of God, who sends us these sufferings, and sends them for our greater good; who knows what is best for us, and orders all things for the best, if we leave ourselves to him. Ah! how vain it is for us, to resist his mighty hand! How foolish and sinful, not to submit to the dispositions of him who is infinitely wise, and infinitely good! See my soul, what a large field for meditation, is here opened to us, in these three points? What motives for patience under all our sufferings!

Consider 3dly, in order to be more in earnest, in seeking to acquire the virtue of patience, the manifold evils we are exposed to by impatience; in a long train of sins against God, against our neighbours, and against ourselves: which proceed from this unhappy source; murmurings

murmurings and rebellions against God; uncharitable censures and rash judgments, perpetual animosities, quarrels and desires of revenge, against our neighbours; desires of our own death, though infinitely unfit for it, continual uneasiness with ourselves, desponding thoughts, and a strange sluggishness, as to taking any pains for the salvation of the soul. Such are usually the wretched fruits of impatience: and what can be worse? *Faith* is lulled asleep, it is quite dead; hope is forgot; the love of God, and of our neighbours, is lost; prayer is neglected; the care of the soul flung away. And in the mean time the evils, under which we labour, instead of being redressed, become more grievous and more intolerable, by our impatient resistance of the holy will of God; we lose the benefit of our sufferings, and we forfeit all the comforts, which God usually affords to patient sufferers. Ah! my soul, how does this impatience make our sufferings resemble those of the damned, who suffer without merit, and without comfort, resisting in vain the will of the Almighty.

Conclude to pray, and to labour in earnest for acquiring the virtue of patience; it will make all thy sufferings light and easy; and entitle them to an eternal reward. Whenever thou art visited with any cross, of what kind soever, always consider it as coming from the hand of God; presently accept of it, and offer it up to Jesus Christ crucified, to be united to his sufferings, to be sanctified through him, and accepted of by his Father, for his own greater glory, and the remission of thy sins. O how happy shalt thou be, if under all thy sufferings thou make this thy practice!

SEPT. 14. *On the exaltation of the cross.*

CONSIDER first, that on this day, upon occasion of the recovery of the cross of Christ out of the hands of Infidels, and the triumphant setting it up again in its place, in the church of mount Calvary; the church of God celebrates *the exaltation of him*, that died for us upon the *cross*, and his glorious triumph

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over sin and death, and over all the powers of hell; and in consequence thereof the establishment of his kingdom, by which he reigns, by grace at present, in the souls of all his servants throughout the world; and shall reign in them for all eternity hereafter in glory. According to that of St. John xii. 31, 32. spoken with relation to his victory on the cross. *Now is the judgment, (that is the condemnation) of the world, now shall the prince of this world (the devil) be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself.* Rejoice, O my soul, in the triumphs of thy crucified king; and beg that he would establish his reign in thee; and draw up thy heart from this wretched earth, and unite it for ever to himself.

Consider 2dly, that the dispositions of a Christian, in order to celebrate in a proper manner, the feast of *the exaltation of the cross*, ought to be suitable to the maxims of the cross, and to the dispositions of Christ crucified. Dispositions, of standing off from the pride, ambition, avarice, and vanity of the world, condemned by the poverty, and humility of the cross; as also from the love of sensual, and worldly pleasures, condemned by the mortification of the cross. Dispositions, of taking up our crosses, and following our crucified King, even to the death of the cross. Dispositions, of waging a perpetual war against that triple concupiscence, which separates worldlings from the cross of Christ, viz. *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*; till dying to the world, and to ourselves, we be *lifted up with Christ from the earth*; crucified to the world, and the world to us; and thus be entitled to a share in his exaltation and triumphs. But, O my soul, how unfit are we to celebrate the victories of our crucified King, over death, sin and hell, whilst we by pride, self-love, and the love of the world, wilfully remain slaves to these same enemies, whose usurpation he sought to abolish, by his death!

Consider 3dly, the sentiments of St. Paul, with relation to the cross of Christ, Gal. ii. 19, 20. *with Christ I am nailed to the cross. And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth*

liveth in me: who loved me and delivered himself for me. Chap. vi. 14. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. He tells the Corinthians, 1 Cor. ii. 2. That he judged not himself to know any thing among them but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, and Chap. 1. 23, 24. that he preached nothing but Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles; but to the true believers the power of God, and the wisdom of God. He proposes his own conduct as a model to the Philippians, *Philip.* iii. 17, 18. and warns them, with tears, against all sensual, and earthly minded Christians, whom he calls *enemies of the cross of Christ*. O how high was the cross of Christ exalted in the heart of this Apostle? It reigned there without controul. And as it was exalted in him, by love and esteem; so it exalted him here, to the glorious fellowship of the sufferings of Christ crucified; and hereafter, to that eternal kingdom, which our Lord has purchased by his cross, for all the true friends and followers of the cross. O how happy are all they, who like this Apostle, are sincere lovers of the cross of Christ!

Conclude for thy own practice, to honour the triumphs of thy crucified King, by placing thyself at the foot of his cross, and there constantly attending to him, and studying well the lessons he teaches thee from his cross, and entering into all his sentiments. He will teach thee to submit to thy crosses with patience, to undergo them with cheerfulness, yea to embrace them with joy. He will undeceive thee, with regard to the false maxims of worldly pride, of the love of riches, and of sensual pleasures; and from his cross will preach to thee his truths, and discover to thee the lovely charms, that are found in humility, poverty of spirit, contempt of the world, and mortification of the flesh. His cross is the school, in which he will teach thee all good, and from which he will not cease to communicate to thee all grace; till at length he draw thee up to himself, and make thee his own for ever.

SEPT. 15. *On the presence of God.*

CONSIDER first, that it is a most certain truth, an article of faith, which no Christian can be allowed to doubt of, that the great God who made us all, the eternal, incomprehensible, infinite Majesty, in whose comparison the whole creation is a mere nothing, is every where present, is truly and really, in every place, and in every being; so that where so ever we are, and whithersoever we go, God is there, and is there with all his divine attributes, the whole Deity, the whole Blessed Trinity is there. *Shall a man be hid in secret places, and I not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?* Jeremiah xxiii. 24. And Psalm cxxxviii. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there, if I descend into hell thou art there, &c.* And do all Christians know this truth, and yet dare to sin? Alas! they cannot here justly plead ignorance: because it is one of the first things they have been taught from their very childhood. But their misery is, they think so little of God, or his divine presence, that they quite forget it: so that we may say to them, with regard to the presence of God, what St. John Baptist said to the Jews, with regard to their Messiah (St. John i. 26. *there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not.* O how little indeed is this great God known, even by too many that call themselves Christians!

Consider 2dly, that God, being every where present, is witness of all our thoughts, words and actions: he sees and hears all that passes: nothing can be concealed from him: no not even the most secret motions and dispositions of the soul. He is the *searcher of the reins and hearts*, Apoc. ii. 23. *reaching to the division of the soul, and of the spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts, and of the intents of the heart: neither is there any creature invisible in his sight, but all things are naked and open to his eyes.* Heb. iv. 12, 13. It is in vain then for the sinner to flatter himself, like the libertine, mentioned by the wise man, Eccclus. xxiii. 25. &c. that
faith,

faith, *who seeth me? Darknes compasseth me about, and the walls cover me, and no man seeth me, Whom do I fear? And in the mean time he considereth not, that darkness and light are alike to the Lord (Ps. cxxxviii. 12.) and that his eyes are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into their hearts, into the most secret parts.* O that men would always remember these great truths!

Consider 3dly, that God is not only really present *with us*, in every place, and sees all that passes; but is really present *within us*; fills our whole soul, and is more truly, perfectly, and intimately in the very centre of the soul, giving, preserving and maintaining its very life and being, than the soul is in the body, which it animates; and to which it gives life and motion. He is the life of all lives; and the being of all beings; and were he to withdraw his presence, though it were but for one moment, from any being whatsoever, in that moment it would cease to be, and would return to its ancient nothing. *In him we live, and move, and be,* saith the Apostle, Acts xviii. 28. So that we are not only encompassed with the Deity on all sides, as the birds are with the air, in which they fly; or the fishes with the waters of the ocean; but are in such manner penetrated by him, that he fills every part of our being, with his whole self; so that it is strictly and literally true, that we are always in him, and he in us. What an aggravation then must it be to the guilt of all our sins, that they not only are committed against God, and before his own eyes; but are committed in God himself, in whom we live, move, and be?

Conclude by regretting thy having thought so little hitherto of the presence of God; by which he is both in all places, and in all things, and more especially in the midst of thyself. Resolve to have this truth ever before thy eyes for the time thou hast yet to come. O let us strive, my soul, to be always with him, who is always with us.

SEPT. 16. *On the exercise of the presence of God.*

CONSIDER first, that a lively sense of the presence of God, is a sovereign means to banish sin from the world; to bring the worst of sinners back to God; to spur on the lukewarm, and make them fervent; and to advance the just in all virtue, till it bring them to perfection; according to that which God spoke to his servant Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1. *walk before me, and be perfect*: as if he should have said; in all thy conversation, and in every step thou shalt take in thy mortal pilgrimage, keep thyself in my presence, by the remembrance of me, and thou shalt be perfect in all virtue. This holy patriarch, and all the ancient fathers observed this lesson, of whom it is written, that they *walked with God*, or that they *walked in the sight of God*, Gen. xlviii. 15. The Psalmist practised the same, Ps. xv. 5. *I set the Lord, saith he, always in my sight*: and calls upon all others to do the like, Ps. civ. 4, *Seek ye the Lord, and be strengthened: seek his face* (that is his presence) *always*. This same has ever been the practice of all the Saints: yea, it is this has made them Saints.

Consider 2dly, that this exercise of the presence of God, is to be performed, partly by the understanding, and partly by the will: for as the blessed in heaven are eternally employed about God, partly by the contemplation and vision of him, which belongs to the understanding; and partly by love and fruition, which belongs to the will; and by this means they are eternally happy, in the enjoyment of this sovereign and infinite good; and eternally united, both by will, and understanding, to the source of all happiness: so the souls of God's servants here upon earth, ought, in both these ways, to apply themselves to God, and to be employed about him: and this is done by the exercise of his divine presence; which employs the understanding, in the thought and remembrance of him, by means of a lively faith, and sense of his being always with us, and
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within us; and entertains the will, that is, the heart and the affection, with him, by continually turning it towards him, by aspirations of love, by oblations of our whole being to him, and by longing desires after the embraces of him, and of an eternal union with him. O how happy is this exercise of the presence of God, which by a perpetual application of all the powers of the soul to God, in some measure anticipates the immortal joys of heaven.

Consider 3dly, that in order to learn, and to practise this heavenly exercise of the presence of God, we must rid our souls of three mortal enemies to this devotion: which are a dissipation of mind; an anxious solicitude for the things of this world; and a disorderly affection to creatures. Where these three, or any one of the three, reigns in the soul; God is usually forgot. *A dissipation* of thought carries the soul from home, to run after a multitude of vain amusements, where she loses the remembrance both of herself, and of her God. *Worldly solicitude* choaks all better thoughts, and suffers them not to take root in the soul. And the *disorderly affections* of the heart, to any things out of God, turn away the heart from God. In order then to practise this necessary attention to the presence of God, we must banish *dissipation* by *recollection* of thought: we must overcome *worldly solicitude*, by *faith*, and *confidence* in God, and by a conformity in all things with his blessed will: and we must correct the *irregularity* of our *affections*, by turning them from the creature to God.

Conclude to guard against these enemies, by setting a watch both upon thy roving imagination, which is ever fond of running after butterflies; and thy unwary heart, that is so easily taken in the nets of wanton love, or other idle, vain, and worldly affections: and to accustom all the powers of thy soul to be employed about their God, who is to make them happy for eternity.

SEPT.

SEPT. 17. *On the advantages of this exercise of the presence of God.*

CONSIDER first, that as the forgetting of God is the source of all our sins, so the remembrance of his divine presence is the source of all our good; it is of infinite advantage both to sinners and Saints. It is a sovereign and universal remedy for overcoming all sorts of temptations; by it's placing the soul near the source of all light and grace, and hiding her as it were under the divine wings; and it is putting at the same time a most powerful and effectual restraint upon her, from daring to offend that tremendous Majesty. For who shall dare, by sin, to commit high treason against God, who sees God before him, and himself surrounded with God? Or who shall dare to affront the divine justice, who has a lively sense of it's being so very near him; and that it stands always turned against wilful sinners? O it is true, that the consideration of the eye of God being always upon us, has obliged the most abandoned sinners, to put a stop at once to their wicked ways, and to betake themselves to a life of penance. It was the case of the famous Thais, who upon this consideration, was suddenly determined to quit both her sins, and the world; and to withdraw herself into the remotest parts of the Desert; where shut up in a lonesome cell, she spent the remainder of her days in weeping, and doing penance for her sins.

Consider 2dly, that a lively sense of the presence of God, excites us also to perform all our works with due perfection, in order to please him, whose eye is always upon us: as the master's eye makes the servant more diligent. It helps to purify our intention in all things, by drawing it to God. It cures our lukewarmness; it dissipates our distractions; it teaches us to pray; it makes us fervent in all our addresses to the divine majesty; it keeps us humble on all occasions; and perfectly annihilates the soul seeing herself placed so near to so great a God. And as the soul, that has a due sense of
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the presence of God, knows that wheresoever he is, he has all his attributes with him; his almighty power, his infinite wisdom, goodness and mercy, his perpetual providence, and loving kindness for his children, together with all the treasures of his divine graces: such a soul as this finds, in the thoughts of God's presence, a source of unspeakable comfort in all her tribulations, of counsel in all her doubts, of succour in all her necessities, and a continual attraction to the love of him. O how easy must it be to a Saint, with such helps as these! Now all these graces, and more, are laid up for thee, my soul, if thou wilt duly exercise thyself in the presence of God.

Consider 3dly, the practical inferences we ought to make, from our faith of the presence of God: that is, what we are bound to do, in consequence of our believing that God is every where, with us, and in us.

1. God's being every where, requires of us, that we should every where take notice of his presence. For can there be an object more worthy of our attention? And will he not then be justly offended, if while we amuse ourselves about every trifle, that comes in our way, we let our God, the Sovereign beauty, and the Sovereign Good, pass unregarded? 2. God being every where present, requires of us, both a modest comportment, on all occasions, as to our exterior: *Let your modesty*, says St. Paul, (Philip. iv. 5.) *be known to all men, the Lord is nigh*: and a most profound respect, as to our interior, considering that infinite majesty, in whose sight we stand. 3. God being every where present, every where requires our love: for wherever we are, we have him with us, who is infinitely lovely, and infinitely loving; infinitely good in himself, and infinitely good to us: and therefore wherever we are, he challenges our love. O turn thyself then, my soul, from all these earthly toys, to this thy sovereign good, which is so near to thee: run to his embraces, and dedicate thyself eternally to his divine love.

Conclude never to regret thy being alone, since thou hast always in thy company that great God, the sight
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and enjoyment of whom is the eternal felicity of the Angels. No company can be more honourable; none more advantageous; since thou hast here the inexhausted source of all good. His conversation is most delightful: the sweetest repose is to be found in him: all other recreations are vain, if compared with this.

SEPT. 18. *On the virtue of obedience.*

CONSIDER first, that *obedience* is a virtue, which teaches us readily to embrace, and diligently to put in execution, whatever is commanded us, either immediately by God himself, or by our lawful superiors, who have their authority from God, and whom he wills and commands us to submit to, as to himself, and to obey for his sake. 1 *Peter* ii. 13. This virtue, like humility her mother, is the special favourite of heaven; as God has abundantly declared, by preferring on many occasions our obedience before all other sacrifices we can offer him. *Doth the Lord desire holocausts, and victims*, said Samuel to Saul, 1 *Sam.* xv. 22, 23. *and not rather that his voice should be obeyed? For obedience is better than sacrifices, and to hearken, rather than to offer the fat of rams: because it is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel, and like the crime of idolatry, to refuse to obey.* viz. inasmuch as disobedience gives away from God, and makes over to his enemy, the best offering our poor stock can afford, that is our will: now our will he chiefly calls for; and whatsoever else we give him, it is all nothing, so long as we refuse to give him our will by obedience. The sacrifice of our hearts he calls for, and not for that of our flocks, or of any other things we can give him without *obedience*.

Consider 2dly, how precious in the sight of God, this virtue of *obedience* must be; since he singled it out amongst all virtues, to be the proper exercise of our first parents, immediately upon their creation, in the earthly paradise; that by the acts of it, they might acknowledge their dependence on their Creator, shew their inviolable fidelity to him, and merit, by their perseverance

severance in *obedience*, an eternal union with him. The happiness, or misery, both of them, and of all their posterity, that is, of all mankind, both for time and eternity, was to be determined by their *obedience*, or *disobedience*. But O the dismal train of evils, they have entailed upon us all, by withdrawing their necks from the sweet yoke of *obedience*! Evils, that must have been without remedy, for eternity, had not the *obedience* of the second Adam slept in, to cancel the *disobedience* of the first Adam. According to that of the Apostle, Rom. v. 19, *As by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one man many shall be made just.* The *disobedience* of the first parents of our flesh involved us all in sin: the *obedience* of the true parent of our spirit, has purchased all mercy, grace and salvation for our souls. But all this good, purchased for us by the *obedience* of the Son of God, is not to be ours, but upon condition of our returning to our duty, by *obedience* to him, who *became the cause of eternal salvation to all that obey him*, Heb. v. 9.

Consider 3dly, that all such as have pleased God, from the beginning, have all been eminent in the virtue of *obedience*. This, joined with *faith*, made Abraham the favourite of God, and procured for him, that all generations should *be blessed in his seed*. This was the virtue of all the patriarchs, and prophets, and of all the Saints of God. Rather to die, than not to obey, was the general maxim of all the Saints. But the great pattern of obedience was the Saint of Saints, whose whole life, from the first instant of his conception till his expiring upon the cross, was one continued exercise of the most consummate obedience. All the thoughts, words and actions of his mortal life were the fruits of obedience: they were all levelled at doing his Father's will, and obeying his commandments. *I came down, from heaven, says he, John vi. 38. not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work, John iv. 34. I seek not my own will; but the will of him that sent me, John v. 30. I lay down my life of myself,*

myself, and I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father. John x. 18. I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak, &c. John xii. 49. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, Philip. ii. 8. that we might enter into the like sentiments of perpetual obedience and humility, verse 5. And shall not this great example of the Son of God himself inspire us with an ardent desire of living and dying in the arms of obedience?

Conclude, if thou desirest to please God, to offer him continually the sacrifice of thy heart, will, and liberty, by perfect obedience; to God himself for his own sake, and to every human creature for God's sake, 1 Pet. ii. 13. that is, to all, that have authority from God over thee, whether in church, or in state. In obeying them thou obeyest God; Luke x. 16: In resisting them, thou resistest the ordinance of God to thy own damnation, Rom. xiii. 2.

SEPT. 19. *On the fruits of obedience.*

CONSIDER first, that one of the deepest wounds, sin has left in the soul of man, is a love of independence; a desire of being his own master; and of living, and acting, according to his own inclinations, without being controuled, by rule, or law, or by the will of any other. Ah! here is the seat of pride, the throne of self-love, and the source of the worst of our passions. Now the virtue that heals this wound is holy obedience: which strikes at the root of all these evils; inasmuch as it casts down that pride, which always affects liberty and independence; drives self-love out of all its intrenchments; keeps all the passions under, by obliging them all to submit to the will and law of God, and to the commands of every vicegerent of his; and ceases not, till it has bound up that tyrant *self-will*, and laid him as an holocaust, to burn, and evaporate on the altar of God. And are not these, my soul, most admirable

nable fruits, which this blessed obedience produces, by a resolute subjection of our own will to the will of God, and to every lawful superiour, for God's sake.

Consider 2dly, what mischief is continually produced in the soul by *self-will*, wherever it reigns; to the end thou mayest set a greater value upon the virtue of *obedience*, which gets the victory over this hellish monster, the source of all our vices. Give ear to St. Bernard (Serm. 3. de Resurrect.) "Self-will, says he, is a perpetual enemy to God, it wages a most cruel war against him. What does God hate? What does he punish at any time, but self-will? Take away self-will, and there shall be no hell: for what is there, that raging fire can take hold on but self-will?—This fury attacks the Lord of Majesty; it withdraws itself from his command, making itself its own master—and as much as lies in it, it robs him of all that is his." He adds, 'that it sets no bounds to its pretensions, that the whole creation cannot satisfy its demands, that it sets itself up in opposition to the creator himself.' Yes, Christians, but this is not all; where this monster reigns, it does not only fill the soul with all kind of evils; it even blasts and corrupts the very best of her actions; inasmuch that where a man does not strive to overcome himself, and to subdue self-will; his virtues will be found to be false and counterfeit, and all his labours in the service of God, or his neighbours, useless and fruitless; as being only the productions of his own humour, his pride, and self-love; and not done for God. See then my soul, how much it imports thee, to get rid of thy self-will, this mother of all mischief; and to acquire a perfect victory over it by the virtue of *obedience*.

Consider 3dly, the other manifold blessings, that attend the true children of *obedience*, as fruits of this excellent tree. A life of perpetual *obedience*, is a perpetual victory, over the world, the flesh and the devil: according to that of the wise man, Prov. xxi. 28. *an obedient man shall speak of victory*: whereas the disobedient man is a slave to all these enemies. Obedience is a perpetual sacrifice, like a whole burnt-offering, by

which a man offers his will, and all its offspring to God. It is a daily growing store of virtue and merit: it gives a double value to all our good actions; and consecrates the most indifferent, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, &c. and makes them highly acceptable in the sight of God. It leads us directly to God: and clearly points out to us, in every thing, his holy will, the unerring rule of all our good. In fine, it brings the soul to a secure and sweet peace of mind, and to a certain paradise of contentment, and joy in the Lord, and in the accomplishment of his blessed will: because the more the soul seeks, and loves, follows, and embraces, by means of holy *obedience*, this divine will of her God; the more she relishes his sweetness, the more confidently she flings herself into his arms, and the more securely she leaves herself, and all things else to his disposal; and commits all her pretensions and interests to him. O how truly wise then are all they, that embrace with their whole souls this sweet yoke of obedience! They are walking in the royal highway, that leads to peace here, and to heavenly bliss hereafter.

Conclude to set a great value upon this virtue of obedience, as the eldest daughter of humility, and the nursing mother of all other virtues. In every station of life, obey them to whom God has given any authority over you, as God himself: it is his will you should do so: and he has never shewn more remarkable judgments, than upon those who have refused to obey the authority established by him. The Son of God, during his whole life, was not only obedient to his Father, but also to his own creatures, to the blessed Virgin, to St. Joseph, to every one in authority, and even to his very executioners. O let us learn to imitate him!

SEPT. 20. *On keeping the commandments.*

CONSIDER first, that there is no salvation for us, without keeping the ten commandments. They are a short abstract of that natural and eternal law, which was imprinted in the heart of man from the beginning, before the written law was delivered to the people of God. They were published by the Almighty, in a most solemn manner, from mount Sina, in the old Testament; and confirmed by the Son of God in the new Testament; declaring the observance of them to be a necessary condition to everlasting life. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments, Mat. xix. 17.* The keeping of these he will have to be the test and proof of our love of him: *If you love me, keep my commandments, John xiv. 15.* And his beloved disciple assures us (1 John ii. 4.) that *he that saith he knoweth him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But he that keepeth his commandments, abideth in him, and he in him, Chap. iii. 24.* See then, my soul, that the most necessary of all devotions, is to dedicate thyself to the love and observance of the commandments of God: no devotion can bring thee to God without this. This is that instrument with ten strings, so often recommended by the psalmist, which makes a most agreeable harmony in the ears of his divine Majesty.

Consider adly, the happiness, in every kind, that always accompanies the keeping God's holy law and commandments: as the same royal prophet witnesses in many places; particularly in the 118th psalm; which is full of testimonies to this effect. And in the 18th psalm, *The Law of the Lord, saith he, is unspotted, converting souls: the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones: The justices of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts; the commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring for ever and ever: the judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves; more to be desired*

than gold and many precious stones; and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. For thy servant keepeth them, and in keeping them there is a great reward. What encomiums are here, heaped one upon another, of the law and commandments of God, under different denominations, and of the excellent fruits that grow from the observance of them! 1. The law of God is beautiful and pure, without spot, or blemish; and it has a wonderful efficacy to turn the soul from sin to God. 2. It is faithful, in what it proposes, and promises; and imparts the truest of all wisdom, to little ones, that is to the humble, who willingly submit their necks to its sweet yoke. 3. It is right in every tittle, agreeable to the sovereign reason, and carries with it joy to the hearts, that embrace it. 4. It is full of spiritual light, to enlighten the inward eyes of the soul, with divine truths. 5. It is most holy, in itself, and comes from the fountain of all holiness, and makes all them holy that observe it; and endures with them for ever and ever. 6. It is true and just, as being given by the eternal Truth and Justice, and justifies itself by its own evidence. 7. It is more amiable and desirable than all the treasures of the universe: and more sweet and delightful than any thing this world can afford: by reason of the spiritual riches of virtue, grace and merit; and the manifold consolations and inward pleasures, the observance of it brings to the soul: besides the reward hereafter, which is incomprehensible and eternal.

Consider 3dly, that the observance of the commandments of God, is not only essentially necessary to salvation; and every way admirable in the fruits it produces, both for this world and the next; but is indeed very sweet, and easy to men of good will. Our Lord assures us, St. Mat. xi. 30. that his yoke is sweet, and his burthen light: and that instead of oppressing us with its weight, it brings refreshment and rest to our souls. And St. John (1 John v. 3.) tells us, that this is indeed the charity, or love of God, that we keep his commandments, and that his commandments are not heavy. Love makes all things easy, that are done for the sake of the beloved:

and

and therefore the true lover of God finds no labour in the keeping his commandments: the grace of God makes them all sweet and agreeable to him. O teach us, dear Lord, to love thee, and command what thou pleasest: thy grace will make all things easy and pleasant, that are to be done, or suffered, for the love of thee.

Conclude to seek thy happiness, both for time and eternity, in the observance of the law and commandments of God. Nothing else can ever make thee happy. Give ear to the Apostle Rom. ii. 9, 10. *Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil... but glory, and honour, and peace to every one that worketh good.*

SEP. 21. *On St. Matthew.*

CONSIDER first, the wonders of divine grace, in the call, and conversion of St. Matthew; changed on a sudden from a worldling, a publican, and a sinner; to be an individual companion, and disciple of Christ; and not long after advanced to be an Apostle, a pillar in Christ's church; a preacher powerful in word and work; a worker of wonderful miracles, a father and converter of nations; an Evangelist, or writer of the gospel; and in a word, a most eminent Saint! O! glorify God, who has wrought all these wonders, to manifest to all generations his infinite power, mercy and goodness; and learn from this example never to despair of the conversion of any one, how remote soever he may seem to be at present from following Christ. The arm of God is not shortened: his power, mercy and goodness is as infinite now as ever; he is equally both able, and willing, to call poor sinners, and to convert them to himself. But alas! our misfortune is, we are not so ready, as Matthew was, to attend to his heavenly calls, and to correspond with his inspirations and graces; we prefer the sitting still in the custom-house of the world, entangled in many vain, and sinful affections, to empty earthly toys, before the rising up without delay, to follow Christ, who calls us

to him. O how pernicious are all those affections, which keep us from Christ!

Consider, 2dly, the lessons St. Matthew gives us in his conversion. 1. By his immediately rising up at the first call, to correspond, with his whole heart, with the grace of God. How often have we been called to be disciples of Christ? And have we ever yet followed the call in good earnest? This *Follow thou me*, with which our Lord called Matthew, is indeed addressed by him to all Christians; in as much as we are all called to be his followers: for the very name of *Christians* implies as much as followers of Christ: and yet how few are there of those that call themselves Christians, who truly follow in their lives, either the doctrine, or the example of Christ? Our Lord was *passing* by, when he called Matthew, and very probably, had that call been neglected, he might not have favoured him with the like grace another time. What obligations then have we to his bounty and mercy, for his repeated calls to us! But what have we not to apprehend, if we continue to abuse his graces, by refusing to correspond with his calls! 2. St. Matthew *left all* to follow Christ; quitting his worldly business, upon which his livelihood depended; and whatsoever else he seemed to possess in this world: Christ does not call us, to quit the business of our lawful callings, nor to give up at once all our worldly goods: but he insists upon our taking off our hearts from all these things; and our parting with every affection that would keep us from him. He expects we should *follow him*, not so much by our bodily steps, as by giving him the chief place in our affections, which are, as it were, the feet of the soul.

Consider 3dly, that St. Matthew, immediately upon his conversion, made a *feast* for our Saviour, in his house; at which many publicans and sinners were present, who also followed our Lord; St. Mark ii. 15. See the force of good example; and how one perfect conversion draws many others after it. This conversion of souls was a more agreeable feast to the divine charity

charity of our Redeemer, than any other entertainment St. Matthew could make for him. Christians, reflect that the Son of God expects also to feast himself with you, and to be entertained by you. *Behold*, says he, *Apocalypse iii. 20. I stand at the gate and knock, if any man shall hear my voice, and open to me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* We entertain Christ, by inviting him into our inward house, and keeping ourselves at home with him, by recollection, and mental prayer; we *feast* him, by giving him our hearts, by love, by frequent and fervent oblations of all the powers of our soul, and of our whole being to him: and he feasts us in return, by giving himself to us. O happy feast indeed, which is in some measure a foretaste of the eternal banquet of heaven!

Conclude to imitate St. Matthew, by a ready compliance with all the divine calls and inspirations; and by not suffering thyself to be kept from following Christ, with thy whole soul, either by the custom-house of the world, or by any of its painted toys, and cobwebs. Let thy example serve to draw others to him: and let the door of thy inward house be ever opened to him, to entertain him; but kept close shut to all his enemies, thy vicious and irregular affections.

SEPT. 22. *On the worship of God, enjoined by the first commandment.*

CONSIDER first, that preface to the ten commandments, delivered Exodus xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* And learn from thence, who it is that enjoins these commandments; by what authority; and what urgent motives we have to oblige us to obey his laws. It is the Lord himself who is our law-giver, the eternal, immense, infinite Deity: the great Creator of heaven and earth; who made us, and all things; our God, our first beginning, and our last end: and who shall dare refuse his commandments; or question

question his authority, or any of the manifold titles he has to our obedience? In these words, he particularly inculcated the obligation, the people of Israel had to keep his commandments; because he had delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt: how much more pressing motives have we Christians, to oblige us to a strict observance of all his divine laws; because we have been redeemed by him, from a slavery infinitely worse than that of Egypt, viz. the slavery of Satan, sin, and hell; and this, by the precious blood of his only Son?

Consider 2dly, that those words, *I am the Lord thy God*, though not expressed in the form of a command, insinuate nevertheless the whole duty of man, with regard to his God: by which, he is bound to worship him, 1st by *faith*, which bows down, and adores God's Truth; *brings into captivity every understanding to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. x. 5. and casts down every proud thought or imagination, that raiseth itself up against his divine word. 2dly, by *hope*, which worships the almighty power, the infinite goodness, and mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, and the veracity of all his divine promises, by a firm and constant reliance upon him, by building entirely on this rock, and fastening the anchor of the soul in him. 3dly, by *divine charity*, which offers to God the sacrifice of our heart, which he chiefly calls for, by loving him in all things, and above all things. 4thly, by the virtue of *religion*, which considering God as our first beginning, and our last end, daily worships him *in spirit and truth*; by adoration, praise, and thanksgiving; by an oblation of ourselves to his holy will, and of all things else to his glory; by joining in the offering of the great sacrifice of the death and passion of his Son; and by frequent and fervent prayer. See my soul, thou never neglect any part of this Christian worship, which thy God expects at thy hands.

Consider 3dly, that by this commandment: *Thou shalt not have strange Gods before me*: we are not only called

called upon, to turn away from all false Gods, to the true and living God: and to renounce all that kind of ungodliness, which may any way corrupt his worship, with superstition or error; but also to make it the great business of our life, to be truly *godly*, by a serious application of our whole souls to the love and service of our maker. For what will it avail us *to know God*, if we *do not glorify him as God*, nor serve him? Will not this be *detaining the truth of God in injustice*? Rom. 1. 6: The great end of our creation was to *glorify God*, and to dedicate our whole lives to his service: we have properly speaking no other business upon earth: if we discharge ourselves well of this great duty, we are truly *godly*; and fulfil the first commandment. But alas! how many thousands are there, that call themselves Christians, who live and die in a notorious breach of this great commandment, by neglecting and forgetting their God, and giving to every thing else the preference before him, and his service!

Conclude to have always before thy eyes the worship, thou owest to thy God, by this first commandment; and in consequence of it, to consecrate the days of thy pilgrimage to his divine love and service: This is the whole duty of man.

SEPT. 23. *On the prohibition of idol-worship.*

CONSIDER first, that the making or worshiping any *idol*, is also forbidden by the divine commandments: by which name is understood any image, or other thing, that is set up, to be served, or honoured as God, or with any part of divine honour. Because our God is a *jealous God*, and will not allow his honour to be given to any other. As to that kind of idolatry, which consists in the serving of stocks and stones, there is no great danger of Christians incurring any such guilt as this: because, as it was long ago foretold by the prophets (*Isai. ii. 18, &c.*) that kind of idol worship has for many ages been abolished, in all nations,

nations, where Christianity has been preached; by the Apostles, and their successors, the pastors and teachers of the Catholick church. The *idols*, that are more to be apprehended in these our days, are of another kind: viz. those of wicked imaginations, errors and heresies; framed, not by the hands, but by the head, of proud, self-conceited men; deluding themselves, and seeking to delude as many others as they can, with the inventions of their own brain, or the suggestions of Satan, which they set up, and worship for divine truths, and father upon the word of God; in spite of the church of God, and its authority, so strongly established, and recommended by that divine word. Ah! Christians, beware of ever *making to yourselves, or bowing down yourselves* to any such *idols* as these. But let the truth of God, proposed to you by the church of God, be ever the object and rule of your faith and worship.

Consider 2dly, the danger of another kind of *idols*, formed not by the brain, but by the disorderly affections of the heart; which too many, who call themselves Christians, daily prefer before the living God, and set up in opposition to him, in his very sanctuary, that is in the temple of their own souls, which at their baptism were consecrated to God. It is the case of all the proud and ambitious, who make an idol of their worldly honour: it is the case of all the worshippers of mammon, the great God of worldlings; and of all the *lovers of pleasure more than of God*. All these in the language of St. Paul, are *idolaters*: because they all *worship and serve the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed for ever*, Rom. i. 25. And thou, my soul, hast thou no share in this kind of idolatry? Are there no idols of this sort set up in thy inward house, to confront the living God. Is there no predominant passion, or affection there, which takes place of God, by drawing thee to offend him? Alas! how often have the very meanest of worldly toys and vanities been preferred by thee before him! And as to that great idol *self*, the continual object of the worship of *self-love* and *self-will*,
art

art thou not daily sacrificing thy God, and all things else to this insatiable monster? It is well if thou art not.

Consider 3dly, that not only direct *idolatry*, but also all *superstition* is forbidden by the first commandment. Of this crime, all those in the first place, are highly guilty, who seek any knowledge, or cure, help or assistance, from the enemy of God and man; by making use of any such instruments, or means, as can have no effect of their own nature, or any otherwise, than by his interposition. For in all these cases, there is a correspondence kept up, and a secret compact made with Satan, or his agents; and consequently a high treason committed against the divine majesty. 2dly, The guilt of *superstition* is likewise incurred by the observance of lucky and unlucky days, omens, dreams, &c. For all these are the relicks of paganism, and serve for nothing but to delude the soul and lay her open to Satan; to take off her dependance from her God, and his divine providence; and to transfer her faith to lying vanities, and inventions of the devil. 3dly, The guilt of *superstition* is also incurred, by corrupting the truth of God's worship, by placing religion in certain empty things, that have no tendency to his divine service, or to his greater glory; or by flattering one's self or others with an assurance of obtaining miraculous favours, or salvation, by the use, or practice of any such things, without any manner of warrant, either of the word of God, or of the church of God. O beware my soul of any such errors!

Conclude to renounce in practice every branch of *idol worship*, and *superstition*. Cast out of the house of God, which is within thee, every idol, of the head, and of the heart: and let the Lord Jesus reign, without any rival, in all the powers of thy soul. Have nothing to do with his enemy, nor with any of his inventions: nor suffer his worship to be vitiated, with any mixture of falshood and lies.

SEPT.

SEPT. 24. *On honouring God's holy name.*

CONSIDER first, those words of the divine commandment, *Exod. xx. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take his name in vain.* This commandment obliges us to shew all respect to the holy name of the Lord our God; and not to profane it by the heinous crimes of *blasphemy* (which flies in the face of God's infinite majesty) or of *perjury*, (which insults his truth, and makes him witness to a lie.) O let not such dreadful evils as these be ever found in the inheritance of Christ, or amongst the professors of the Christian name! It would be wonderful if any nation were suffered to continue upon earth, that should encourage, or even tolerate such monstrous guilt. Moreover this commandment forbids also all profane swearing and cursing, and all other irreverent use of the sacred name of God. Ah! how common is this guilt amongst Christians! And how dismal are the consequences of it, in the manifold judgments of God, inflicted in punishment of these sins, both in this world, and in the next! O true it is: *The Lord will not hold him guiltless, that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.* Hence the wise man tells us, *Ecclus. xxiii. 12. A man that sweareth much shall be filled with iniquity, and a scourge shall not depart from his house.*

Consider 2dly, the different ways by which unhappy mortals daily violate and profane God's most sacred name. How they swear by it, at every turn; often falsely, often unjustly, generally rashly; and thereby continually expose themselves to the evident danger of that most enormous sin, of calling in their God to be witness to their lies. Ah! how often do they with equal rashness and profaneness, by their curses and imprecations, presume to cite his divine Majesty, to serve them, in quality of executioner, to execute

execute the damnation, which every humour, or passion of theirs pronounces against some or other of his creatures! How often in their madness do they pronounce the like sentence, and call for the like vengeance, even upon their own souls? How often is the sacred name of *God*, brought in, even by the better sort, without any reason, to express every passion, or emotion of their souls? Alas what liberty is here taken, by these worms of the earth, with the tremendous majesty of the God of heaven! And shall all this pass unpunished? Oh! to what a low ebb is Christianity come, when so many thousands of those who call themselves Christians, are more guilty by far of profaning the holy name of God, than either Turks or Pagans; and even glory in their guilt! And thou my soul, hast thou never gone into their counsel; or has thy glory never been in their assembly? O, see thou detest all such wickedness; and reclaim as many as thou canst from these ways of death. And if at any time thou hearest God's holy name thus profaned, lift up thy heart to heaven, and join with all the Choirs of blessed Spirits there, in adoration, praise and love of his divine majesty; to make what amends thou canst for all these outrages offered to the King of heaven.

Consider 3dly, that the great business of a Christian is to glorify the name of God. both by his tongue, and by his life. We glorify his holy name by the tongue, when we ever praise him, and extol his mercies; when our words and conversation are always directed to promote his glory, and the edification of our neighbours. We glorify his holy name by our lives, when we live as becomes his children, and his people: when our light so shines before men, that they take occasion from hence to glorify our Father who is in heaven. For as it is written concerning wicked livers, that *through them the name of God is blasphemed amongst the nations*: so the lives of God's true servants are *the sweet odour of Christ in every place*;

and not only give continual glory to God themselves, by the exercise of all virtues; but also bring many others to glorify him, by the efficacy of their example.

Conclude to keep a great guard upon thyself, that for the future thou mayest never use the holy name of God, but with respect and devotion. And as for whatsoever profanations thou hast hitherto been guilty of, repair that guilt, to the best of thy power, with penitential tears, and by dedicating the whole remainder of thy life to procure the greater glory of God's name.

SEPT. 25. *On keeping holy the Lord's day.*

CONSIDER first, that divine precept: *Remember thou keep holy the sabbath day.* Exod. xx. 8. and reflect how just it is, that next to the capital duties, of acknowledging one only true and living God; and paying due respect to his name; we should also set aside one day at least in the week, to be sanctified to him, and to be spent in his divine worship. The particular appointment of the seventh day, as the day of God's rest, and the figure of our eternal rest, after the six days labours of this transitory life, was but a part of the ceremonial law, which is no longer obligatory under the new covenant of Jesus Christ; and therefore the day has been changed into the first day of the week, to honour the Resurrection of the Son of God, by which he put as it were the finishing stroke to the great work of our redemption; and the glorious promulgation of his law, by the coming down of the Holy Ghost. But the precept itself, as to its substance, and as to the obligation of dedicating, in a more particular manner, a competent portion of our days to the worship of him, who in all reason might justly claim them all, is unchangeable, indispensable and eternal: and is here enforced with that word, *Remember*, not found in any

Of the other commandments, to inculcate the utmost importance of our strict observance of it. O it is true, that the religious keeping of these days, agreeably to the ordinance of God and his church, is the sovereign means to bring Christians, after their short labours here, to their true and everlasting Sabbath.

Consider 2dly, that on these days (which we are commanded to keep holy) all *servile works*, and profane employments are forbidden to Christians: lest their attention should be taken off from the worship of God; or their application to religious duties interrupted by their worldly occupations. But then if these kinds of *works*, which are otherwise commendable in themselves, and even obligatory at other times, are strictly forbid on these days, as hindrances of God's worship: how much more are all such criminal diversions, as are lawful at no time; and all those *works* of darkness and sin, which are *servile* in the very worse of senses; because by them men *serve* the devil, and are far more taken off by them from their application to God, than by any other labour whatsoever? But Oh! how common are these sinful profanations of the Lord's day! How many seem to have no other intention, in resting on this day from their usual employments, than to dedicate this holy time, to vanity, sloth, luxury, or some other criminal passion, without giving any part of it to God? See, my soul, this be never thy practice: but if thou givest the other days of the week, to the world, to the business of thy calling, to working for thy temporal livelihood; give God *his day*, to be employed in his service, in the business of eternity, and in working for thy eternal salvation.

Consider 3dly, that all Christians are obliged on these days, to attend to the publick worship of God, in his church; and in particular to assist at the divine sacrifice, in which we solemnly celebrate the death and passion of the Son of God. Here we are to join with him, and with his whole family, in paying adoration,

praise and thanksgiving, to the Divine Majesty. Here we are to bewail our sins in his sight, and crave mercy for them, through Christ's precious blood, here offered to God. Here we are to present through him our prayers and supplications, both for ourselves and for the whole world, before *the throne of grace*. We are also on these days to dispose our souls to receive, either sacramentally, or at least spiritually, the body and blood of Christ: to attend to the word of God; to read devout books, to meditate on divine truths, and to employ a good part of our time in these spiritual exercises. Alas! how very little are these important duties thought on by too many Christians! How many will neither sanctify these days, in a proper manner, themselves, nor suffer their servants, or others that are about them, to sanctify them? And what a strict account must they give for all these abuses another day!

Conclude to make it thy business, that thou at least, and thy house, may give to God what belongs to God, by duly serving him on his own day. This diligence will entitle thee, and thine to his blessing; and thy sanctifying his day will be a powerful means to sanctify thee.

SEPT. 26. *Honour thy father and thy mother, &c.*

CONSIDER first, that next to the precepts, that enforce those most essential duties, which we owe to God himself, follows the commandment, of *honouring* our parents, as well corporal as spiritual, under God, and all such as have from God a power over us, whether in church, or state. This, says the Apostle, Eph. vi. 2. *is the first commandment with a promise: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest be long-lived upon earth*. Nothing could be more agreeable to nature, to reason, and to religion, than this divine precept. And we find by many instances, how much God takes to heart our strict observance of it; and how severely

verely he punishes; even in this life, the transgressors, as well by ordering in the law, such as are notoriously guilty in this kind, to be put to death without mercy; as by the many dreadful judgments he often inflicts upon them. Christians, what is your comportment to your parents, &c. Is it dutiful, or undutiful? O never flatter yourselves, with the expectation of God's blessing, either in this world, or the next, if you are undutiful.

Consider 2dly, what this *honour* means, which the law of God requires, from children to their parents. For it does not merely consist in cringing and ceremony: but it implies a sincere love, joined with respect and reverence; a ready obedience to their orders, where they no ways clash with the holy will, and law of God; and a perpetual disposition to afford them, or procure for them, all proper assistances, as well in their corporal, as in their spiritual necessities: inasmuch that our Lord will not allow of any gifts, made to himself, or to his temple, to the prejudice of that honour and support, which we owe to our parents. *Matt. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6.* Christians, give ear to the admonitions of the Holy Ghost by the wise man, *Eccles. iii.* and learn from him what your duty is to your parents, and what the reward of your compliance with that duty. *Honour thy father in word and word, and in all patience; that a blessing may come upon thee for him; and his blessing may remain in the latter end. The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children, but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation. Son support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life; and if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not, when thou art in thy strength—and in justice thou shalt be built up, and in the day of affliction thou shalt be remembered; and thy sins shall melt away, as the ice in the sun warm weather. And again. He that honoureth his father, shall have joy in his own children; and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard. He that honoureth his father shall enjoy a long life, &c. He that*

feareth the Lord honoureth his parents, and will serve them, as his masters, that brought him into the world.

Consider 3dly, what the duty is, on the other hand, of parents with regard to their children; and so in proportion, of other superiors with regard to them, that are committed to their charge. For their obligation is greater than many apprehend; and their own eternal welfare, as well, as that of their children, or subjects, absolutely depends upon their discharge of it. It is true, they are not to neglect the care of their temporal well-being, as far as is consistent with the safety of their souls; but they must take much more to heart their everlasting salvation: and therefore from their very childhood, they must give them an early knowledge of their Christian duty, and insil into their tender minds the fear and love of God: they must accustom them to prayer, and must teach them how to pray: they must make them sensible of the necessity of their breaking their own will, of their curbing their passions, and denying themselves, if they would be happy, either here, or hereafter. In a word, they must remove far from them all the occasions of sin; and procure them all the helps they can to establish them in Christian piety. O how easy it would be for parents to bring up Saints for heaven, if they would be diligent in putting all this in practice! But alas! how many rather train up their children for hell, by abandonirg them from their childhood to their own corrupt inclinations; and inspiring them with the maxims of the world, the flesh, and the devil?

Conclude to discharge thyself diligently of thy respective duty, whether of a child, or of a parent, of a subject, or of a superior, according to the station, in which God has placed thee. Pass not over this matter too slightly, in the examination of thy conscience; as too many do, who flatter themselves with a false security, whilst they live and die in the neglect of these great relative duties.

SEPT. 27. *Thou shalt not kill.*

CONSIDER first, that this commandment does not only forbid all wilful murder, unjust shedding of blood, beating, or doing any thing else, that may hasten one's own, or any other person's death: but also all thoughts, that have any tendency that way, all wishes or desires of the death of any one, whether through malice or envy, or for some temporal convenience, or interest; as also all manner of hatred, and rancour of heart, to any one living. For it is written, *1 John iii. 15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.* Christians, look well to yourselves, and carefully examine into the true state of your interior, in this respect. You have perhaps hitherto flattered yourselves, that you had nothing to reproach your conscience with, on the score of the horrible sin of murder: but have you never wilfully entertained any hatred, envy or malice to your neighbours? If you have; know, that all this is like murder in the eyes of God. O take heed of living in any such malicious dispositions to any one person upon earth; lest you should be excluded thereby from any share in *eternal life*, to which murderers have no title.

Consider 2dly, how the Son of God himself has explained to us the extent of the obligation of this commandment, *Matt. v. 21. &c. You have heard, saith he, that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill; And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother Raca (a word expressing indignation or contempt) shall be in danger of the council (a higher and more severe tribunal) and whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.* By which our Lord would have all Christians to understand, that this divine law was not only designed to restrain the hand from killing, but also the heart from wilfully entertaining

ing the passion of anger, or the desires of revenge: and much more from suffering our wrath to break out into words of indignation or contempt; much less into downright affronts, and injuries, which might either rob our neighbour of his honour, or of the peace of his mind, or as it too commonly happens, of the grace of God, by provoking him also to passion and sin.

Consider 3dly, how the Holy Ghost also declares himself in like manner against this murdering crime of passion and revenge, Eccles. xxviii. *He that seeketh to revenge himself, saith he, shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance.*

—*One man keepeth anger against another; and doth he seek to be healed by God? He hath no mercy on a man like himself, and doth he intreat for his own sins? He that is but flesh nourisheth anger; and with what face doth he ask forgiveness of God? Who shall obtain pardon for his sins?—Forgive thy neighbour if he have hurt thee, and then shall thy sins be forgiven to thee when thou prayest.—Remember thy last things, and let enmity cease.—Remember the fear of God, and be not angry with thy neighbour. Remember the covenant of the most High, and overlook the ignorance of thy neighbour. Refrain from strife, and thou shalt diminish thy sins, &c.* O let us imprint these divine lessons deep in our souls, and we shall fulfil this great commandment.

Conclude, if thou desirest to keep thyself far from the guilt of murder, to banish far from thy soul every thought, that has any tendency to malice or revenge: O learn from the doctrine and practice of thy Saviour, rather to suffer in thy person, in thy honour, or in thy worldly goods, than by seeking revenge, to endanger the loss of thy soul, by losing thy God, and his grace.

SEPT. 28. *On spiritual murder.*

CONSIDER first, that there is another kind of *murder*, besides that which destroys the body, *viz.* the murdering of the soul, by bringing upon it the death of sin. A crime most heinous in the eye of God; and most pernicious to the souls of men; and yet most common amongst Christians. Of this kind of *murder* the devil was the first author; by *whose envy death came into the world*: Wis. ii. 24. and *who was a murderer from the beginning*, John viii. 44. by drawing man into deadly sin. And all they follow him, and are *on his side*, and even take him for *their father*, who seek to fulfil *his desires*, by involving their neighbours in the guilt of sin, which *when compleated begetteth death*, James i. 15. Ah! how common are these kinds of *murders*! and how many ways are they daily committed? by alluring or enticing others to evil; by word, or work; dress or carriage; or by provoking them to it; or by teaching them the evil they knew not before; or by engaging them in dangerous diversions, and conversations; or, which is the most common of all, by authorizing sin, and encouraging, and inviting men to the committing it, by bad example. And what is all this, but murdering as many souls, as there are persons, to whom one has voluntarily given occasion of mortal sin.

Consider 2dly, how grievous a crime this *murdering* of souls must be in the sight of God; since it defeats, as much as lies in man, the great business, for which God sent his own Son upon earth, *viz.* the salvation of souls, which he takes so much to heart. It daringly promotes the interest of Satan, that arch-rebel, and sets up his standard against that of Christ: it encourages deluded mortals to follow that enemy of God and man, rather than their Creator and Redeemer: it debauches as many of God's subjects from their allegiance, as it draws souls into sin: it even treads under foot the precious blood of Christ, and makes void his passion and death,

death, by causing those souls to perish eternally, for whom Christ died. What a complication is here of high treasons against the Divine Majesty! How manifold, and how enormous a guilt! And what can such traitors and murderers as these expect from God, but the most dreadful of all judgments, if they do not prevent them, by a speedy and serious conversion, and by endeavouring to make the best reparation they are able; especially by reclaiming as many souls as they can from Satan and sin, and reconciling them to God.

Consider, *godly*, the grievousness of this evil of *spiritual murder*, from another head; that is from the mischief it does to man; and the dismal consequences it brings after it, both for time and eternity. The *murder* of the body is certainly a most heinous sin, and one of the greatest that can be committed between man and man; it even *cries to heaven for vengeance*. But then it only reaches the body, which is the meaner part of man, and which by its condition must otherwise speedily perish: it does not touch the immortal soul; it does not extend to eternity. But *spiritual murder* kills the soul, by robbing it of the grace of God, which is its true life; it separates the soul from God, and condemns it to an eternal separation from him; it brings upon it a second and everlasting death; it plunges both soul and body into the flames of hell. O how loudly then must the blood of so many unhappy souls, which are daily sent to hell by these *spiritual murders*, cry to heaven for vengeance against their murderers!

Conclude to look well to thyself that thou never have any share in this enormous guilt of *spiritual murder*, by giving occasion to any other's sin. For why shouldst thou thus declare war against heaven; thrust thy neighbour's soul into hell; and bring upon thy own head a multiplied damnation; even as many hells, as thou hast drawn souls into sin?

SEPT. 29. *On Michaelmas Day.*

CONSIDER first, that on this day, the church of God celebrates the festival of St. Michael, and of all the heavenly host of Angels and Archangels, Cherubims and Seraphims, and the rest of the orders of blessed spirits. Wherefore the devotion of this day, is: First to join with all these heavenly choirs, in giving glory, praise and thanksgiving to God: who created these angelick spirits to glorify him; and who has inspired them all with an unspeakable love for us; and has sent them to minister for us, in order to our receiving the inheritance of salvation, Heb. i. 14. 2dly, We ought on this day to congratulate with these heavenly citizens, and their great leader St. Michael; these friends of God, and of us; and to rejoice in their eternal happiness. 3dly, We ought to associate ourselves with them, in order jointly to promote the common cause of our common master; that is, the greater glory of God, and the advancement of his divine service and love; and with them to fight his battles against the devil, and his rebel angels. O Christians, how happy, how glorious is this cause, in which both we and they are engaged! And how advantageous is it for us, to have such auxiliaries in this great warfare!

Consider 2dly, what lessons we have to learn, from the behaviour of these blessed spirits, from the first moment of their creation; and what we are to imitate in them. They no sooner received their being, but they turned to their Creator, by adoration and love; and dedicated themselves eternally to him. We were made for the same end as they were; that is, to glorify God; and like them, were strictly obliged to turn to our Creator, as soon as we were capable of knowing him, and to dedicate our whole being to his love and service. But have we done so? Have we not rather like Lucifer, and his associates, turned away from God, at our first coming to the use of reason, and preferred every

empty toy before him? The good Angels are perpetually attentive to God; wheresoever they are, or whatever they are about; their eye, and their heart is always upon him: they are perpetually jealous of his honour, and ever labouring to procure, not their own glory, but the glory of their great king. Do we imitate them? Is the eye of our soul turned towards God in all our employments? Are we always seeking his greater glory? If so, like the Angels, wheresoever we are, and whatsoever we are doing, we shall in some measure have heaven with us, even here upon earth.

Consider 3dly, from the gospel of this day, St. Matt. xviii. what kind of exercises of virtue, are to bring us effectually to the eternal society of the Angels. We must be *converted* from the corruption of pride, which cast the devil out of heaven, *and become as little children*, by innocence and humility, or we shall have no share with the good Angels in *the kingdom of heaven*. There is no room for *pride* in that blessed society: the devil is the *king over all the children of pride*, Job xli. 25. There is no room there, for any that wilfully associate themselves with the rebels, (that have been cast out from thence) by corrupting others; or suffering themselves to be corrupted, and drawn away from their allegiance; by giving, or taking *scandal* against their own souls. The true way to arrive at the happy company of the Angels, is humility, innocence, and purity. If we would come amongst them, we must *cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh, and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *For nothing that is defiled, shall enter into that blessed city, where they dwell for ever.* Revel. xxi. 27.

Conclude, so to honour St. Michael, and all the good Angels, as to imitate their fidelity to their God; their constant attention to promote his glory; and their constant opposition to all the enterprizes of his enemy. The name of *Michael* signifies *who is like God*? Let this be your motto in all your spiritual warfare: at all times

times keep close to God, and he will keep close to you: prefer his honour before all other considerations; and he will *speedily crush Satan under your feet*: yea, he will enable you to *walk upon the asp, and upon the basilisk, and to tread upon the lion and the dragon*, Ps. xc: and nothing shall have power to hurt you.

SEPT. 30. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

CONSIDER first, that by this commandment, is forbidden in the first place the heinous crime of *adultery*: as not only directly contrary to chastity, but to justice also, in the highest degree; as carrying with it one of the greatest injuries, that can be done to one's neighbour; and violating an indefeasible right, confirmed to him by the law of God, and of nature; and withal profaning the sanctity of the matrimonial contract, and breaking through the solemn vows, of mutual fidelity, annexed to it. But though *adultery* be the only crime here named, it not being necessary to reckon up in particular all the shameful sins of lust, yet it is not the only evil forbidden by this commandment; which moreover condemns and prohibits all manner of uncleannesses, whether committed by, or with, married persons, or single; and much more all other unnatural sins of lust, committed upon one's self, or with any other; as also all abuses of the marriage-bed, by any liberties contrary to the sanctity of it, or disagreeable to the end of this holy institution. O how odious are all these impurities, in the sight of God, and his holy angels, before whose eyes they are committed! What dreadful judgments have they often drawn down from heaven! What black and filthy flames are prepared for the punishment of them in hell! O my soul, let us ever fly and abhor all these abominations!

Consider 2dly, that by this commandment, (as explained by our Lord himself, St. Matt. v. 27, 28. &c.) are not only forbidden all those grosser sins of unclean-

ness; but also all other kinds of immodesties, which have any manner of tendency towards those greater crimes, even to every wanton glance of the eye, and every impure inclination of the heart. *You have heard, saith our Lord, that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say to you, that whosoever looketh to a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* If then we would be truly chaste, as the divine law commands us, we must, with holy Job, put a restraint both upon our eyes, and upon our thoughts and imaginations, lest death enter into our souls by those windows. *I made a covenant, saith he, with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin, Job xxxi. 4.* lest, as he adds, *God above should have no part in him.* How much more does this commandment forbid all loose discourse, unchaste words and songs: which not only demonstrate a corrupted heart, in them, that take delight in talking of such matters, which St. Paul would not have so much as once named amongst Christians; Eph. v. 3. *(For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, Matt. xii. 34.)* but also spread the infection amongst their neighbours, to corrupt them also, by filling their minds and hearts with foul imaginations, and impure affections? O how common, and how dreadful is this evil! and how many souls owe their damnation to it! Ah! it is too true, that *evil communications corrupt good manners*; and that thousands of Christians lose their innocence, and are made a sacrifice to Satan, by means of such lewd discourses, and corrupt conversations.

Consider 3^dy, that if this commandment is designed to lay a restraint upon our eyes, upon our thoughts and imaginations, upon our wishes and desires, and upon our words and conversations; how much more upon our actions; by condemning and prohibiting all carnal liberties, all wanton play, all indecent touches, all immodest embraces, &c. all which violently tend to defile both soul and body with lust? O Christians deceive not yourselves: all these liberties are criminal; and as
such

such are loudly condemned in the word of God, *Gal. v. 19.* and *Eph. v. 3. 4.* as absolutely excluding all that are guilty of them from any inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Conclude, if you desire to have any share in Christ, and in his eternal inheritance, to keep your souls and bodies pure from the defilements of lust. In order thereunto, be exact in observing the rule our Lord has given you, *Matt. v. 29, 30. viz.* of avoiding all occasions, that may expose you to the danger of lust, however agreeable, or dear they may be to your natural inclinations; or however necessary they may seem to you. For what can be more dear or necessary than a hand or an eye? And yet we must part with these, rather than lose our souls. Apply this rule to all such company or conversation, to all such books or entertainments, to all such plays or diversions, to all such shews or comedies, as are apt to fill your minds with impure thoughts, or otherwise to endanger your chastity; and let neither the example, nor the invitations and persuasions, nor the authority of any one living, prevail on you to transgress this divine rule; or to fling yourselves into the jaws of this infernal dragon of lust; which in all such places and occasions, lies in wait to devour your souls.



